PR4079
T96
1893

—— Two of Them. *10 illustrations.*
New York: Lovell, Coryell & Company [1893]

12mo, blue cloth, lettering and design in gilt on front cover.

FIRST EDITION, with the publisher's address "5 and 7 East Sixteenth Street" in imprint on title-page. With half-title and 4 pp. of advertisements at the end. A pirated issue.

TWO OF THEM

Digitized by the Internet Archive
in 2008 with funding from
Microsoft Corporation

http://www.archive.org/details/twoofthem00barrrich

"I want you to fill my pipe, and ram down the tobacco with your little finger."
"Very well; give it me. This way?"

TWO OF THEM

BY

J. M. BARRIE

AUTHOR OF "THE LITTLE MINISTER," "AULD LICHT IDYLS," "A TILLYLOSS SCANDAL," "A WINDOW IN THRUMS," ETC.

NEW YORK

LOVELL, CORYELL & COMPANY

5 AND 7 EAST SIXTEENTH STREET

Copyright, 1893,

by

UNITED STATES BOOK COMPANY,

[*All rights reserved.*]

CONTENTS.

	PAGE
TWO OF THEM,	9
OUR NEW SERVANT,	23
REMINISCENCES OF AN UMBRELLA,	31
THE INCONSIDERATE WAITER,	39
THE PLAYWRIGHT AND THE FOWL,	69
THE "FOX-TERRIER" FRISKY,	74
THE FAMILY HONOR,	81
THE WICKED CIGAR,	91
THE RESULT OF A TRAMP IN SURREY,	97
MY HUSBAND'S BOOK,	104
A LADY'S SHOE,	113
WAS IT A WATCH?	136
"THE MAN FROM NOWHERE,"	144
A HOLIDAY IN BED,	149
IS IT A MAN?	159
A WOODLAND PATH,	181
WOMAN AND THE PRESS,	187
A PLEA FOR SMALLER BOOKS,	192
BOYS' BOOKS: THEIR GLORIFICATION,	197
THE LOST WORKS OF GEORGE MEREDITH,	204
THE HUMOR OF DICKENS,	210

M609359

PAGE

GRETNA GREEN REVISITED, ... 218

THOUGHTFUL BOYS MAKE THOUGHTFUL MEN, . . . 235

NDINTPILE PONT (?), ... 244

TO THE INFLUENZA, ... 250

FOUR-IN-HAND NOVELISTS, ... 255

"Q," 263

RULES FOR CARVING, ... 270

WHAT IS SCOTT'S BEST NOVEL? 272

MY FAVORITE AUTHORESS, ... 277

LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS.

FACING PAGE

"I WANT YOU TO FILL MY PIPE, AND RAM DOWN THE TOBACCO WITH YOUR LITTLE FINGER." "VERY WELL; GIVE IT ME. THIS WAY?" . . . . *Frontispiece*

SOMEONE WAS LEANING OVER ME, TO LOOK OUT AT THE WINDOW, ... 42

IN THE LIBRARY I FOUND, TO MY SURPRISE, WILLIAM ON A LADDER DUSTING BOOKS, ... 50

"I WAS TO DO LIKE THIS," SHE REPLIED, AND WENT THROUGH THE SUPPING OF SOMETHING OUT OF A PLATE IN DUMB SHOW, ... 54

DISAGREEABLE CIRCUMSTANCES, THEREFORE, COMPELLED ME TO TAKE TEA WITH A WAITER'S FAMILY, . . 64

WHO IS SOMETIMES TO BE FOUND IN HIS ARM-CHAIR, BY THE FIRE, TOYING WITH A LADY'S SHOE, . . . 112

NEXT DAY, NOTWITHSTANDING, SHE WAS BACK AT THE WINDOW, ... 116

"LOVE OF MY LIFE," BEGAN TOM, THEN KISSED HER HAND, ... 130

HE SAT UP EXCITEDLY, RUBBED HIS HANDS NERVOUSLY ON HIS TROUSERS, AND PEERED, NOT AT THE STAGE, BUT AT THE WINGS, ... 158

"I USED TO BE IN THE PROFESSION MYSELF," HE SAID, SIGHING, "I AM JOLLY LITTLE JIM," 166

TWO OF THEM.

SHE is a very pretty girl, though that counts for nothing with either of us, and her frock is yellow and brown, with pins here and there. Some of these pins are nearly a foot long, and when they are not in use she keeps them in her hat, through which she stabs them far down into her brain. This makes me shudder; but, so is she constructed that it does not seem to hurt, and in that human pin-cushion the daggers remain until it is time for her to put on her jacket again. Her size is six-and-a-quarter, and she can also get into sixes.

She comes here occasionally (always looking as if she had been born afresh that morning) to sit in the big chair and discuss what sort of girl she is, with other matters of moment. When she suddenly flings herself forward—clasping her hands on her knee—and says "Oh!" I know that she has remembered something which must out at once or endanger her health; and whether it be "I don't believe in anybody or anything—there!" or "Why do we die so soon?" or "I buy chocolate drops by the half-pound," I am expected to regard it, for the time being, as one of the biggest things of the day. I

allow her, but no other, to mend my fire; and some of her most profound thoughts have come to her with a jerk while holding the poker. However, she is not always serious, for, though her face is often so wistful that to be within a yard of it is too close for safety, she sometimes jests gleefully, clapping her hands; but I never laugh, rather continue smoking hard; and this she (very properly) puts down to my lack of humor. The reason we get on so well is because I treat her exactly as if she were a man, as per agreement. Ours is a platonic friendship, or, at least, was, for she went off half-an-hour ago with her head in the air.

THE BARGAIN.

After only one glance in the mirror, she had spread herself out in the big chair, which seems to me to put its arms round her. Then this jumped out:

"And I had thought you so trustworthy!" (She always begins in the middle.)

"What have I done?" I asked, though I knew.

"Yesterday," she said; "when you put me into that cab. Oh, you didn't do it, but you tried to."

"Do what?"

She screwed her mouth, whereupon I smoked hard, lest I should attempt to do it again. But she would have an answer.

"Men are all alike," she said, indignantly.

"And you actually think," I broke out, bitterly, "that if I did meditate such an act (for one brief moment), I was yielding to the wretched impulses to which other men give way! Miss Gunnings, do you know me no better than that?"

"I don't see what you mean," she replied. (Her directness is sometimes a little annoying.)

I wagged my head mournfully, and there ensued a pause, for I did not quite know what I meant myself.

"What do you mean?" she asked, more gently, my face showing her that I was deeply hurt—not angry, but hurt.

I laid my pipe on the mantelpiece, and speaking very sadly, proved to her that I had nothing in common with other young men, though I forget now how I proved it. If I seemed to act as they did my motives were quite different, and therefore I should be judged from another standpoint. Also I looked upon her as a child, while I felt very old. (There are six years between us.)

"And now," said I, with emotion, "as you still think that I tried to—to do it from the wretched, ordinary motive (namely, because I wanted to) I suppose you and I must part. I have explained the affair to you because it is painful to me to be misunderstood. Good-by, I shall always think of you with sincere regard."

Despite an apparent effort to control it, my voice

broke. Then she gave way. She put her hand into mine, and with tears in her eyes, asked me to forgive her, which I did.

This little incident it was that showed her how different I am from other men, and led to the drawing up of our platonic agreement, which we signed, so to speak, that afternoon over the poker. I promised to be to her such a friend as I am to Mr. Thomson; I even undertook, if necessary, to scold her though she cried (as she hinted she should probably do), and she was to see that it was for her good, just as Thomson sees it when I scold him.

A NECESSARY CONSEQUENCE.

"I shall have to call you 'Mary.'"

"I don't see that."

"Yes, it is customary among real friends. They expect it of each other."

I was not looking her in the face, so cannot tell how she took this at first. However, after she had eaten a chocolate drop in silence, she said:

"But you don't call Mr. Thomson by his Christian name?"

"Certainly I do."

"And he would feel slighted if you did not?"

"He would be extremely pained."

"What is his Christian name?"

"Thomson's Christian name? Oh, his Christian name. Thomson's Christian name is—ah—Harry."

"But I thought his initials were J. T.? Those are the initials on that umbrella you never returned to him."

"Is that so? Then my suspicions were correct, the umbrella is not his own. How like him!"

"I had an idea that you merely called him Thomson?"

"Before other people only. Men friends address each other in one way in company, but in quite another way when they are alone."

"Oh, well, if it is customary."

"If it were not I would not propose such a thing."

Another chocolate drop, and then,

"Mary, dear——"

"*Dear!*"

"That is what I said."

"I don't think it worthy of you. It is taking two chocolate drops when I only said you could have one."

"Well, when I get my hand into the bag I admit—I—I mean Thomson would have not been so niggardly."

"I am certain you don't call him 'Harry, dear.'"

"Not, perhaps, as a rule, but at times men friends are more demonstrative than you think them. For instance, if Thom—I mean Harry—was ill——"

"But I am quite well."

"Still, with all this influenza about——"

HER BACK.

She had put her jacket on the table, her chocolate drops on the mantelpiece, her gloves on the couch. Indeed, the room was full of her, and I was holding her scarf, just as I hold Thomson's.

"I walked down Regent Street behind you yesterday," I said, sternly, "and your back told me that you were vain."

"I am not vain of my personal appearance, at any rate."

"How could you be?"

She looked at me sharply, but my face was without expression, and she sighed. She remembered that I had no humor.

"Whatever my faults are, and they are many, vanity is not one of them."

"When I said you had a bad temper you made the same remark about it. Also when——"

"That was last week, stupid! But, of course, if you think me *ugly*——"

"I did not say that."

"Yes, you did."

"But if you think nothing of your personal appearance, why blame me if I agree with you?"

She rose haughtily.

"Sit down."

"I won't. Give me my scarf." Her eyes were flashing. She has all sorts of eyes.

"If you really want to know what I think of your personal appearance——"

"I don't."

I resumed my pipe.

"Well?" she said.

"Well?"

"Oh, I thought you were going to say something."

"Only that your back pleased me in certain other respects."

She let the chair take her back into its embrace.

"Mary, dear!"

It is a fact that she was crying. After I had made a remark or two:

"I am so glad you think me pretty," she said, frankly, "for though I don't think so myself, I like other people to think it, and somehow I thought you considered me *plain*. My nose is all wrong, isn't it?"

"Let me see."

"So you admit you were entirely mistaken in calling me vain?"

"You have proved that I was."

However, after she had drawn the daggers out of her head and put them into the scarf (or whatever part of a lady's dress it is that is worked with daggers), and when the door had closed on her, she opened it and hurriedly fired these shots at me:

"Yes, I am horridly vain—I do my hair every

night before I go to bed—I was sure you admired me the very first time we met—I *know* I have a pretty nose—good-afternoon."

HER SELFISHNESS.

She was making spills for me, because those Thomson made for me had run down.

"Mary."

"Well?"

"Mary, dear!"

"I am listening."

"That is all."

"You have such a curious, *wasteful* habit of saying one's name as if it was a remark by itself."

"Yes, Thomson has noticed that also. However, I think I meant to add that it is very good of you to make those spills. I wonder if you would do something else for me?"

"As a friend?"

"Yes. I want you to fill my pipe, and ram down the tobacco with your little finger."

"You and Mr. Thomson do that for each other?"

"Often."

"Very well; give it me. This way?"

"It smokes beautifully. You are a dear, good girl."

She let the poker fall.

"Oh, I'm not," she wailed. "I am not *really* kindhearted; it is all selfishness."

This came out with a rush, but I am used to her, and kept my pipe in.

"Even my charities are only a hideous kind of selfishness," she continued, with clasped hands. "There is that poor man who sells match-boxes at the corner of this street, for instance. I sometimes give him twopence." (She carries an enormous purse, but there is never more than twopence in it.)

"That is surely not selfish," I said.

"It is," said she, seizing the poker as if intending to do for herself that instant. "I never give him anything simply because I see he needs it, but only occasionally when I feel happier than usual. I am only thinking of my own happiness when I give it him. That is the personification of selfishness."

"Mary!"

"Well, if that isn't, this is. I only give him something when I am passing him, at any rate. I never dream of crossing the street on purpose to do it. Oh, I should need to be terrifically happy before I would bother crossing to give him anything. There! what do you think of me now?"

"You gave him something on Monday when I was with you?"

"Yes."

"Then you were happy at that time?"

"What has that got to do with it?"

"A great deal."

I rose.

"Mary, dear——"

"No! Go and sit over there."

STAGGERERS.

The subjects we have discussed over the poker! For instance:

The rapidity with which we grow old.

What on earth Mr. Meredith means by saying that woman will be the last thing civilized by man?

Thomson.

What will it all matter a hundred years hence?

How strangely unlike other people we two are!

The nicest name for a woman. (Mary.)

The mystery of Being and not Being.

Why does Mary exist?

Does Mary exist?

She had come in, looking very doleful, and the reason was, that the more she thought it over, the less could she see why she existed. This came of reading a work entitled "Why Do We Exist?"—a kind of book that ought not to be published, for it only makes people unhappy. Mary stared at the problem with wide, fixed eyes until I compelled her to wink by putting another in front of it, namely, "Do You Exist?" In her ignorance she thought there was no doubt of this, but I lent her a "Bishop Berkeley," and since then she has taken to pinching

herself on the sly, just to make sure that she is still there.

HER SCARF.

So far I had not (as will have been noticed) by a word or look or sign broken the agreement which rendered our platonic friendship possible. I had not even called her darling, and this because, having reflected a good deal on the subject, I could not persuade myself that this was one of my ways of addressing Thomson. And I would have continued the same treatment had it not been for her scarf, which has proved beyond all bearing. That scarf is entirely responsible for what happened to-day.

It is a stripe of faded terra-cotta, and she ties it round her mouth before going out into the fog. Her face is then sufficiently irritating, but I could endure it by looking another way, did she not recklessly make farewell remarks through the scarf, which is very thin. Then her mouth—in short, I can't put up with this.

I had warned her repeatedly. But she was like a mad girl, or, perhaps, she did not understand my meaning.

"Don't come near me with that thing round your mouth," I have told her a dozen times. I have refused firmly to tie it for her. I have put the table between me and it, and she asked why (through the scarf). She was quite mad.

And to-day, when I was feeling rather strange at any rate! It all occurred in a moment.

"Don't attempt to speak with that scarf round you," I had said, and said it with my back to her.

"You think I can't, because it is too tight?" she asked.

"Go away," I said

She turned me round.

"Why," she said, wonderingly, "it is quite loose. I believe I could whistle through it."

She did whistle through it. That finished our platonic friendship.

FIVE MINUTES AFTERWARD.

I spoke wildly, fiercely, exultingly; and she, all the time, was trying to put on her jacket, and could not find the sleeve.

"It was your own fault; but I am glad. I warned you. Cry away. I like to see you crying."

"I hate you!"

"No, you don't."

"A friend——"

"Friend! Pooh! Bah! Pshaw!"

"Mr. Thomson——"

"Thomson! Tehut! Thomson! His Christian name isn't Harry. I don't know what it is. I don't care!"

"You said——"

"It was a lie. Don't screw your mouth in that way."

"I will, if I like."

"I warn you!"

"I don't care. Oh! Oh!"

"I warned you."

"Now I know you in your true colors."

"You do, and I glory in it. Platonic friendship —fudge! I quarrelled with you that time to be able to hold your hands when we made it up. When you thought I was reading your character I—— Don't—screw—your—mouth!"

"Give me my scarf."

"I lent you Berkeley so that I could take hold of you by the shoulders on the pretence that I was finding out whether you existed."

"Good-by *forever!*"

"All the time we were discussing the mystery of Being I was thinking how much I should like to put my hands beneath your chin and flick it."

"If you ever dare to speak to me again——"

"Don't—screw—your—mouth. And I would rather put my fingers through your hair than write the greatest poem in——"

She was gone, leaving the scarf behind her.

My heart sank. I flung open my window (six hansoms came immediately), and I could have jumped after her. But I did not. What I saw had a remarkable effect on my spirits. *I saw her cross the*

street on purpose to give twopence to the old man who sells the matches.

All's well with the world. As soon as I can lay down the scarf I am going west to the house where Mary, dear, lives.

OUR NEW SERVANT.

"At last," my wife said to me, "I am to have a good servant."

She had said this frequently before, and afterward changed her mind. Though we were but lately married, we had already had considerable experience of servants, and the new-comer was to take the place of one who smashed things, but had too much delicacy to mention it. As the china was also delicate, we had to choose between her and it.

"You need not look so sceptical," said my wife, "for this is really an extremely superior servant. She has the most glowing characters from four former mistresses. She has only been a servant for a year, yet they all speak of her as a gem."

"But they don't seem to have kept her long," I pointed out.

"No; I noticed that, and asked them why it was. Two of them said that she was really too good for them, and the others only repeated that she was a marvel."

The new servant arrived in the evening. I am not a man who takes much part in the domestic management of the house, and she began her work

without an interview with me. I noticed her first at family worship, when her lady-like manners made me think that she might be a princess in disguise. She was removing the supper things, when my wife said to me, in French:

"Is she not quite distinguished-looking?"

Having thought out the grammatical form of reply, as suggested by the "Students' Manual," I answered, in the same language:

"Yes, her elegant manner of carrying away the tray fascinates me."

Then the servant said, in a sweet, musical voice, "Pardon me, but perhaps I ought to say that I speak French."

My wife looked at me, and I looked at my wife. I whistled softly, and that was a language the new servant seemed to understand too. As soon as she had retired, "Well, she is a superior girl," I said, and my wife nodded, but without enthusiasm.

For my own part I must say I was rather glad to see the French language put a stop to in our family.

There could be no doubt that our new servant was all that her former mistresses had called her. She could pile on coals without putting out the fire, her cooking was as good as her French. Indeed, one would have said that she had learned both in the same country. As soon as the door-bell rang she was at the door to open it, and she never entertained her male cousins in the kitchen.

My wife reads a good many novels, which it was my custom to get for her from a library. She has a leaning toward learning and an inclination to the frivolous, which struggle for the mastery over her, and, accordingly, she tells me to get a queer assortment of books for her. Herbert Spencer and Miss Florence Marryat are her two favorite authors.

"What novels will I get for you to-day?" I asked her, soon after the new servant came. She sighed for reply.

"I don't think I'll read any more novels," she added, in a dejected voice.

"Waste of time?" I asked.

She sighed again.

"It is the servant," she said.

"Why, what has she been doing? I thought she was such a good servant that you would have more time for reading now than ever?"

"Oh, she is a model servant; but I don't like her to see me reading novels."

"You didn't use to be so particular. Are you afraid to set her a bad example?"

"I wish I could! No, I don't mean that, but I am ashamed to read light books in her presence. I see her raising her eyebrows in surprise every time she finds me with three volumes in my lap."

"She can't know anything about what is inside the books."

"Oh, does she not! When I went into the kitchen

yesterday evening, I found her reading Huxley. The day before I noticed a copy of Walter Savage Landor on the dresser, and thought it was yours. I began to say to her that she must not take away your books from the library without my permission, and what do you think her answer was?"

"No doubt she said the cat had brought it."

"Ah, she is not like other servants. She said it was her own copy, and that she would not have thought of taking yours in any case, because it is an incomplete edition."

"What on earth could have induced the girl to buy a copy of Landor?"

"She told me she liked to read him because he wrote such a superb style. 'As stylists,' she said, 'Landor and DeQuincey are my two favorite authors.'"

"What a superior servant!"

"Yes, but she did not surprise me. Books are her chief subject of conversation. She told me the other night that, in her opinion, Froude did not understand Carlyle."

"I expect she puts on airs?"

"No, quite the contrary; she is always very polite and obliging. I have never the least trouble with her. What makes me uncomfortable is the feeling that in her heart she must despise me."

From the day we had this conversation, I was asked to bring a few novels to the house. Those

that did come were at once locked away in drawers, only to be taken out and perused when my wife was not under our superior servant's eyes. It was melancholy to see my wife slipping a novel beneath her chair when the new servant came in.

In time I felt the presence of that girl hardly less than my wife did. I remember shaking one evening when she detected me reading my incomplete volume of Landor. I had begun to take in an edition of "Selected Works" of the poets, but I gave them up. How could I read selected works, when she had the complete works in the kitchen?

My wife and I have naturally simple tastes, and we used to play bagatelle in the evening. When the new servant saw us at it she could not help smiling, and then we were ashamed. We continued to play, because neither of us liked to let on to the other, but often my wife blushed, and so did I.

"The fire is low," I said, one night while we were playing. "You had better ring for coals."

"But what would Isabella think," said my wife, "if she saw us playing at bagatelle again?"

"I don't care what Isabella thinks," I cried in a passion. "Is she master in this house, or am I?"

"Shut the bagatelle board," she replied, "and I'll ring."

I was not to make myself as small as this, however, so I rang fiercely, and when Isabella answered it I glared like one who meditated eating her. She

did not smile this time, but I, too, felt that her respect for her master was going.

"Isabella tells me," my wife said next day, "that the ancients used to play a game not unlike bagatelle."

"Then we have a warrant for playing it."

"But she says they only played it when they were children."

After that we played bagatelle no more. It was never mentioned by either of us. The board was hidden away beneath the spare bedroom bed. Soon I noticed that my wife had begun to make her own dresses. From one point of view this was not a matter for her husband to complain of, but my wife looked so woe-begone that I asked why she had become her own dressmaker.

"Isabella," she replied.

"Well, what has Isabella been doing now?"

"She has not been doing anything. But she makes her own dresses and sews so beautifully that I am utterly ashamed of myself. I can't look her in the face."

I stamped my feet, for I had now begun to hate that jewel of a servant.

One Sunday I noticed that my wife carried a note-book and a pencil to church with her.

"Are you to take notes of the sermon?" I asked.

She said that was her intention.

"What," I asked, "put this into your head?"

"Can't you guess?" she asked.

"Not that wretched Isabella?" I cried.

"Yes, of course it was, but don't call her names. She is a model servant."

"I suppose she takes notes of the sermons?"

"She does more than that, she takes the complete sermon down in shorthand."

About a week ago a series of lectures on English literature and other subjects was begun in our town.

"Those who get so many marks in the examinations," my wife told me, "can then go to St. Andrews and become L.L.A., I think it is."

I had no desire that my wife should be an L.L.A., but she wanted to attend, and I did not mind.

"Is this not the first night of the lectures?" I asked her one evening.

She said it was.

"Then is it not time you were getting ready?"

"Oh, I'm not going."

"Not going? Why?"

"Isabella——"

"This is too much! What has Isabella to say against the lectures?"

"She says nothing against them. She is going."

"Wh-a-t!"

"I couldn't prevent her. She hardly ever asks out."

"Well, it would have been absurd if you and she had gone together."

"Perhaps, but that is not what made me give the idea up. I feel that Isabella will certainly take most marks in the examination, and that shames me."

"Hum! I think that the best thing we can do with Isabella is to bid her leave."

My wife's eyes gleamed with delight.

"But she is such a perfect girl," she said. "We could have no excuse for sending her away."

"Excellent excuses," I said, "I want to read novels again and to play bagatelle, and, in short, to feel that I am as good as my servant."

"We will never get such a servant again."

"I hope not. She is too good for us."

The end of it was that I bribed Isabella to go. We now have a servant who cannot write her own name, and she is a delightful change.

REMINISCENCES OF AN UMBRELLA.

Lying here on the floor of a closet, my head loose, one of my ribs in twain, and two others mended with a bootlace, I am no longer the umbrella I have been. But though my experiences may seem dark, I am not a cynic. I have had my gay moments as well as my misfortunes. If men have grumbled at me because I would not open, sweet words of love have been whispered beneath my covering; and if many have owned me, one has paid for me. Omitting all reference to my early years, why should I not now, as other veterans have done, set down some reminiscences of the men and women I have known?

The first man with whom I had any close acquaintance was a minister. He came into the shop where I originally saw the light, and said that he wanted an umbrella. The kind he wanted was a very good one, of pure silk, and his only stipulation was that it should be as cheap as alpaca.

"John," said my maker to his assistant, "show the gentleman a Marquis, and keep the price down."

I am a Marquis, and after trying thirty-three of us, the minister selected me. While he was taking six-

pence off the price, he had a conversation with my maker, which I did not understand at the time, though well I know its meaning now.

"You are the first minister," said my maker, "who has bought an umbrella, to my knowledge, for the last nine months."

"Why," said my new owner, as he rolled me up very tight (for he was a young man), "it seems to me that all ministers carry umbrellas."

"That's another thing," says my maker.

"You mean," says the minister, "that we have them presented to us?"

"That's a delicate way of putting it," says my maker. "I don't think you have been long a minister?"

"No," says the minister.

"After you have been," says my maker, winking to John, "I'll lose your custom."

Then my owner and I went off along the street. I have nothing to say against him, except that he took me out in fine weather, always keeping me tightly rolled up, and he spent hours in his lodgings trying to roll me tighter. I don't know that any of my owners ever loved me as this first one did, and I think the reason was because he alone bought and paid for me. He called himself a minister, but as it turned out he was only a divinity student, and it was at the college that we parted. That was seventeen days after he bought me, and I can still

remember the affectionate glance he gave me as he put me into the rack, where there were about a dozen other umbrellas, and two sticks with brass knobs. That day it rained. The first to leave the room was the professor, a handsome man of noble countenance, and when he saw the rain he turned back to the rack and looked at the umbrellas. I was the best, so, after looking at the others, he picked me out, put me up, and walked home beneath me, a beautiful look still lurking on his benevolent face.

This eminent professor is No. 2 of the men I have known, and during the three weeks in which I belonged to him he called me his new umbrella. Once I heard his daughter (whose umbrella I should have liked to be) ask him why he took me everywhere except to the college, and the good old man replied that the students were given to taking away other people's umbrellas. Once during this time I set eyes upon my first owner, and for a moment I thought I was to be restored to him. He and some other students came to the house to tea, and when he saw me standing in the professor's rack he exclaimed:

"That umbrella," he said, pointing to me, "is the very image of one I lost at the college the other day."

The professor was standing by, telling his guests as they came in one by one that it had been a frosty day, and when he heard this remark about me he

said, in his kindly voice, that one umbrella was very like another.

"You students," he added, "ought to be more careful about your umbrellas. I am constantly hearing complaints about their going astray."

Then he took them all into his study, but after a little he came out and hid me behind the hall clock.

That, I thought, was the last I would see of my first owner, but it was not so. The daughter of the house, to whom I have already referred, had overheard the talk about me, and I saw her at the time look queerly at her father. When the student was going she came to the door with him, and I heard them say something about "the usual place at five o'clock." Then she called him back, and running to the clock, felt for me with her hand, just as if she knew that her father often put umbrellas there. She thrust me into the student's hand, muttering something about papa's being very absent-minded.

Thus was I restored to the student, but only for a brief space. On the following Friday he took me to the class again, and once more the professor was the first to leave. His eye lighted up when he saw me, and he half drew me from the rack. Then he caught sight of another umbrella with an ebony handle, the owner of which was also a student. He compared us for a moment, felt the materials, and finally went off with the other one. When its owner could not find it he said that I was the next best, and half

an hour afterward I was standing in a corner of his room.

Hardly can this gentleman be included among the men I have known, for he vanished from my sight, or I vanished from his, on the following evening. On that evening a friend called on him, a gentleman in a light suit and a white hat, with a mean mustache, and a foolish expression of countenance—a maker of pipes, as I gathered from the conversation. It was a fine evening when he called, but not when he got up to go; and not having an umbrella, he was distressed lest his hat should suffer.

"Can you not lend me an umbrella?" he asked; but my new owner shook his head.

"You never brought back the last one," he replied.

"Never mind," said the visitor; "give me one and I'll bring them both back together."

"I don't have one," said my owner.

"Why, what is that in the corner?"

"Oh, I had forgotten; but that is a very valuable one. I paid twenty-five shillings for it last week."

"It will do very well," said the gentleman, seizing hold of me.

He promised to bring or send me back next day, but a week passed, and every evening found him strutting along the pier, with me in his right hand. Late one afternoon, however, when he was in his workshop, making another pipe, the student came to the door and said that he wanted his um-

brellas. Then the gentleman received him hospitably, but declared that he had taken back both umbrellas three days before. So solemnly did he insist on this that the other knew not what to say, and went off in a daze.

The next man I knew was introduced to me, so to speak, by his wife. My owner had taken me to a dinner-party, and I was in the umbrella-stand when two of the company left. They were the first to go, and I saw at once that they were husband and wife. The gentleman was taking his own umbrella from the stand (for he was weak-minded) when the lady handed me to him, saying, "This is a much better one." Thus it was that I again changed owners.

From this house I was taken by the first gentleman who called, but he lost me on the way. We went by rail, and another gentleman in the carriage left, taking me with him. He was the gentleman who had me in his hand when he walked home from soirées with young ladies. Three of them he told (but all at different times) that he loved them passionately, but could not afford to marry; and they all promised to be sisters to him, which pleased him vastly more, I think, than if they had promised to marry him.

He left me at the outside of his door one day because I was very wet, and there I was found by a policeman, who took me in charge and ran me into the police station. The magistrate picked me out

as the best of six, and took me home, where I lay for a week, when I was abstracted from the stand by a town councillor. He took me to a meeting of his friends, where there was talk of presenting something to an Irish statesman, and at first I thought they were to present me to him, but it turned out to be something else. This town councillor I heard boasting that he never carried any but the best umbrellas, and he also boasted that he had not bought an umbrella since he was sixteen years of age.

A councillor took me away from the council chamber, and had a rim of silver put round me, with his name and address on it, "for," he said, "if you do not take some such precaution you are sure to lose your umbrella, the public are so careless or so dishonest." In his possession I remained for nearly a month, but one day he took me to a club, and I had not been in the umbrella-stand for more than five minutes when an advocate came out, and selecting me with care, walked away with me. He took the silver rim off with his pocket-knife, and then carried me to a shop, where he instructed the shopman to put a band round me saying that I was presented to John Smith, Esq., by his affectionate son-in-law, June 24, 1889. My new owner was the man who abused me because I would not open, and he also grumbled because once I was open I was reluctant to shut, for now I had become somewhat stiff. Once he was in such a rage at me that he hit me

savagely against the hat-stand, and that was how my first rib was broken.

I was saved from this man by an elderly lady, who took me away beneath her waterproof, thinking I should do for an office umbrella for her son. When they discovered, however, that the rib was in two, and that I was spotted with holes, they raged together at the old gentleman for owning such an umbrella. I was kept at the office, until one of the clerks fell over me and broke two more ribs. My owner now declared that I had been an admirable new umbrella when he bought me the week before, and the unhappy young man had to give him another, whereupon he got me as a gift. I was sorry for him, for he told his master that the new umbrella had cost him fifteen shillings, but soon I discovered that he had picked it out of the stand at a doctor's house. He tried to mend me with a bootlace, but my appearance was now hopelessly plebeian, and I heard him tell his sister, who lived with him, that he was ashamed to be seen in the street with me. One day our door stood wide open, and so did the door that was only separated from ours by an iron railing; so she took me into the next house and left me in the umbrella-stand there, taking away a new umbrella in exchange. It is in this house I am lying now. They offered me to the milkman and the postman, but neither would have me; so I was carried contemptuously into the closet where I now lie.

THE INCONSIDERATE WAITER.

FREQUENTLY I have to ask myself in the street for the name of the man I bowed to just now, and then, before I can answer, the wind of the first corner blows him from my memory. I have a theory, however, that those puzzling faces, which pass before I can see who cut the coat, all belong to club-waiters.

Until William forced his affairs upon me, that was all I did know of the private life of waiters, though I have been in the club for twenty years. I was even unaware whether they slept down-stairs or had their own homes, nor had I the interest to inquire of other members, nor they the knowledge to inform me. I hold that this sort of people should be fed and clothed and given airing and wives and children, and I subscribe yearly, I believe, for these purposes; but to come into closer relation with waiters is bad form; they are club fittings, and Williams should have kept his distress to himself or taken it away and patched it up, like a rent in one of the chairs. His inconsiderateness has been a pair of spectacles to me for months.

It is not correct taste to know the name of a club-waiter, so that I must apologize for knowing Will-

iam's, and still more for not forgetting it. If, again, to speak of a waiter is bad form, to speak bitterly is the comic degree of it. But William has disappointed me sorely. There were years when I would defer dining several minutes that he might wait on me. His pains to reserve the window-seat for me were perfectly satisfactory. I allowed him privileges, as to suggest dishes, and would give him information, as that someone had startled me in the reading-room by slamming a door. I have shown him how I cut my finger with a piece of string. Obviously he was gratified by these attentions, usually recommending a liqueur; and I fancy he must have understood my sufferings, for he often looked ill himself. Probably he was rheumatic, but I cannot say for certain, as I never thought of asking, and he had the sense to see that the knowledge would be offensive to me.

In the smoking-room we have a waiter so independent that once, when he brought me a yellow Chartreuse, and I said I had ordered green, he replied, "No, sir; you said yellow." William could never have been guilty of such effrontery. In appearance, of course, he is mean, but I can no more describe him than a milkmaid could draw cows. I suppose we distinguish one waiter from another much as we pick our hat from the rack. We could have plotted a murder safely before William. He never presumed to have opinions of his own. When such was

my mood he remained silent, and if I announced that something diverting had happened to me he laughed before I told him what it was. He turned the twinkle in his eye off or on at my bidding as readily as if it was the gas. To my "Sure to be wet to-morrow," he would reply, "Yes, sir;" and to Trelawney's "It doesn't look like rain," two minutes afterward, he would reply, "No, sir." It was one member who said Lightning Rod would win the Derby and another who said Lightning Rod had no chance, but it was William who agreed with both. He was like a cheroot, which may be smoked from either end. So used was I to him that, had he died or got another situation (or whatever it is such persons do when they disappear from the club), I should probably have told the head waiter to bring him back, as I disliked changes.

It would not become me to know precisely when I began to think William an ingrate, but I date his lapse from the evening when he brought me oysters. I detest oysters, and no one knew it better than William. He has agreed with me that he could not understand any gentleman's liking them. Between me and a certain member who smacks his lips twelve times to a dozen of them, William knew I liked a screen to be placed until we had reached the soup, and yet he gave me the oysters and the other man my sardine. Both the other member and I called quickly for brandy and the head waiter. To do

William justice, he shook, but never can I forget his audacious explanation, "Beg pardon, sir, but I was thinking of something else."

In these words William had flung off the mask, and now I knew him for what he was.

I must not be accused of bad form for looking at William on the following evening. What prompted me to do so was not personal interest in him, but a desire to see whether I dare let him wait on me again. So, recalling that a castor was off a chair yesterday, one is entitled to make sure that it is on to-day before sitting down. If the expression is not too strong, I may say that I was taken aback by William's manner. Even when crossing the room to take my orders he let his one hand play nervously with the other. I had to repeat "Sardine on toast" twice, and instead of answering "Yes, Sir," as if my selection of sardine on toast was a personal gratification to him, which is the manner one expects of a waiter, he glanced at the clock, then out at the window, and, starting, asked, "Did you say sardine on toast, sir?"

It was the height of summer, when London smells like a chemist's shop, and he who has the dinner-table at the window needs no candles to show him his knife and fork. I lay back at intervals, now watching a starved-looking woman asleep on a door-step, and again complaining of the club bananas. By and by, I saw a little girl of the commonest

Someone was leaning over me, to look out at the window.

kind, ill-clad and dirty, as all these arabs are. Their parents should be compelled to feed and clothe them comfortably, or at least to keep them indoors, where they cannot offend our eyes. Such children are for pushing aside with one's umbrella; but this girl I noticed because she was gazing at the club windows. She had stood thus for perhaps ten minutes, when I became aware that someone was leaning over me, to look out at the window. I turned round. Conceive my indignation on seeing that the rude person was William.

"How dare you, William?" I said, sternly. He seemed not to hear me. Let me tell, in the measured words of one describing a past incident, what then took place. To get nearer the window, he pressed heavily on my shoulder.

"William, you forget yourself!" I said, meaning—as I see now—that he had forgotten me.

I heard him gulp, but not to my reprimand. He was scanning the street. His hands chattered on my shoulder, and, pushing him from me, I saw that his mouth was agape.

"What are you looking for?" I asked.

He stared at me, and then, like one who had at last heard the echo of my question, seemed to be brought back to the club. He turned his face from me for an instant, and answered, shakily

"I beg your pardon, sir! I—I shouldn't have done it. Are the bananas too ripe, sir?"

He recommended the nuts, and awaited my verdict so anxiously while I ate one that I was about to speak graciously, when I again saw his eyes drag him to the window.

"William," I said, my patience giving way at last; "I dislike being waited on by a melancholy waiter."

"Yes, sir," he replied, trying to smile, and then broke out passionately, "For God's sake, sir, tell me, have you seen a little girl looking in at the club windows?"

He had been a good waiter once, and his distracted visage was spoiling my dinner.

"There," I said, pointing to the girl, and no doubt would have added that he must bring me coffee immediately, had he continued to listen. But already he was beckoning to the child. I had not the least interest in her (indeed it had never struck me that waiters had private affairs, and I still think it a pity that they should have); but as I happened to be looking out at the window I could not avoid seeing what occurred. As soon as the girl saw William she ran into the middle of the street, regardless of vehicles, and nodded three times to him. Then she disappeared.

I have said that she was quite a common child, without attraction of any sort, and yet it was amazing the difference she made in William. He gasped relief, like one who has broken through the anxiety that checks breathing, and into his face there came

a silly laugh of happiness. I had dined well, on the whole, so I said:

"I am glad to see you cheerful again, William."

I meant that I approved his cheerfulness, because it helped my digestion, but he must needs think I was sympathizing with him.

"Thank you, sir," he answered. "Oh, sir! when she nodded and I saw it was all right, I could have gone down on my knees to God."

I was as much horrified as if he had dropped a plate on my toes. Even William, disgracefully emotional as he was at the moment, flung out his arms to recall the shameful words.

"Coffee, William!" I said, sharply.

I sipped my coffee indignantly, for it was plain to me that William had something on his mind.

"You are not vexed with me, sir?" he had the hardihood to whisper.

"It was a liberty," I said.

"I know, sir; but I was beside myself."

"That was a liberty also."

He hesitated, and then blurted out:

"It is my wife, sir. She"——

I stopped him with my hand. William, whom I had favored in so many ways, was a married man! I might have guessed as much years before had I ever reflected about waiters, for I knew vaguely that his class did this sort of thing. His confession was distasteful to me, and I said, warningly:

"Remember where you are, William."

"Yes, sir; but, you see, she is so delicate"——

"Delicate! I forbid your speaking to me on unpleasant topics."

"Yes, sir; begging your pardon."

It was characteristic of William to beg my pardon and withdraw his wife like some unsuccessful dish, as if its taste would not remain in the mouth. I shall be chided for questioning him further about his wife, but, though doubtless an unusual step, it was only bad form superficially, for my motive was irreproachable. I inquired for his wife, not because I was interested in her welfare, but in the hope of allaying my irritation. So I am entitled to invite the wayfarer who has bespattered me with mud to scrape it off.

I desired to be told by William that the girl's signals meant his wife's recovery to health. He should have seen that such was my wish and answered accordingly. But, with the brutal inconsiderateness of his class, he said:

"She has had a good day, but the doctor, he—the doctor is afeard she is dying."

Already I repented my question. William and his wife seemed in league against me, when they might so easily have chosen some other member.

"Pooh the doctor," I said.

"Yes, sir," he answered.

"Have you been married long, William?"

"Eight years, sir. Eight years ago she was—I—I mind her when . . . and now the doctor says"——

The fellow gaped at me. "More coffee, sir?" he asked.

"What is her ailment?"

"She was always one of the delicate kind, but full of spirit, and—and you see she has had a baby lately"——

"William!"

"And she—I—the doctor is afeard she's not picking up."

"I feel sure she will pick up."

"Yes, sir?"

It must have been the wine I had drunk that made me tell him:

"I was once married, William. My wife—it was just such a case as yours."

"She did not get better, sir?"

"No."

After a pause, he said, "Thank you, sir," meaning for the sympathy that made me tell him that. But it must have been the wine.

"That little girl comes here with a message from your wife?"

"Yes; if she nods three times, it means my wife is a little better."

"She nodded thrice to-day."

"But she is told to do that to relieve me, and maybe those nods don't tell the truth."

"Is she your girl?"

"No, we have none but the baby. She is a neighbor's. She comes twice a day."

"It is heartless of her parents not to send her every hour."

"But she is six years old," he said, "and has a house and two sisters to look after in the daytime, and a dinner to cook. Gentlefolk don't understand."

"I suppose you live in some low part, William."

"Off Drury Lane," he answered, flushing; "but—but it isn't low. You see, we were never used to anything better, and I mind when I let her see the house before we were married, she—she a sort of cried, because she was so proud of it. That was eight years ago, and now—she's afeard she'll die when I'm away at my work."

"Did she tell you that?"

"Never. She always says she is feeling a little stronger."

"Then how can you know she is afraid of that?"

"I don't know how I know, sir, but when I am leaving the house in the morning I look at her from the door, and she looks at me, and then I—I know."

"A green Chartreuse, William!"

I tried to forget William's vulgar story in billiards, but he had spoiled my game. My opponent, to whom I can give twenty, ran out when I was sixty-seven, and I put aside my cue pettishly. That in

itself was bad form, but what would they have thought had they known that a waiter's impertinence caused it! I grew angrier with William as the night wore on, and next day I punished him by giving my orders through another waiter.

As I had my window seat, I could not but see that the girl was late again. Somehow I dawdled over my coffee. I had an evening paper before me, but there was so little in it that my eyes found more of interest in the street. It did not matter to me whether William's wife died, but when that girl had promised to come, why did she not come? These lower classes only give their word to break it. The coffee was undrinkable.

At last I saw her. William was at another window, pretending to do something with the curtains. I stood up, pressing closer to the window. The coffee had been so bad that I felt shaky. She nodded three times and smiled.

"She is a little better," William whispered to me, almost gayly.

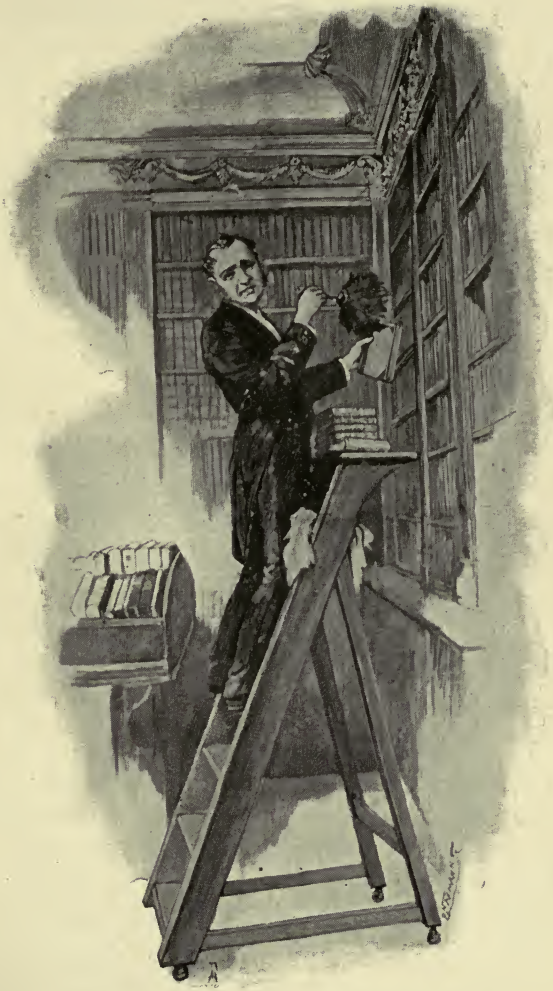
"Whom are you speaking of?" I asked, coldly, and immediately retired to the billiard-room, where I played a capital game. The coffee was much better there than in the dining-room.

Several days passed, and I took care to show William that I had forgotten his maunderings. I chanced to see the little girl (though I never looked for her) every evening and she always nodded three times,

save once, when she shook her head, and then William's face grew white as a napkin. I remember this incident because that night I could not get into a pocket. So badly did I play that the thought of it kept me awake in bed, and that, again, made me wonder how William's wife was. Next day I went to the club early (which was not my custom) to see the new books. Being in the club at any rate, I looked into the dining-room to ask William if I had left my gloves there, and the sight of him reminded me of his wife, so I asked for her. He shook his head mournfully, and I went off in a rage.

So accustomed am I to the club, that when I dine elsewhere I feel uncomfortable next morning, as if I had missed a dinner. William knew this; yet here he was, hounding me out of the club! That evening I dined (as the saying is) at a restaurant, where no sauce was served with the asparagus. Furthermore, as if that were not triumph enough for William, his doleful face came between me and every dish, and I seemed to see his wife dying to annoy me.

I dined next day at the club, for self-preservation, taking, however, a table in the middle of the room, and engaging a waiter who had once nearly poisoned me by not interfering when I put two lumps of sugar into my coffee instead of one, which is my allowance. But no William came to me to acknowledge his humiliation, and by and by I became aware that he was not in the room. Suddenly the thought



In the library I found, to my surprise, William on a ladder dusting books.

struck me that his wife must be dead, and I—— It was the worst-cooked and the worst-served dinner I ever had in the club.

I tried the smoking-room. Usually the talk there is entertaining; but on that occasion it was so frivolous that I did not remain five minutes. In the card-room a member told me, excitedly, that a policeman had spoken rudely to him; and my strange comment was:

"After all, it is a small matter."

In the library, where I had not been for years, I found two members asleep, and, to my surprise, William on a ladder dusting books.

"You have not heard, sir?" he said in answer to my raised eyebrows. Descending the ladder he whispered, tragically:

"It was last evening, sir. I—I lost my head and I —swore at a member."

I stepped back from William, and glanced apprehensively at the two members. They still slept.

"I hardly knew," William went on, "what I was doing all day yesterday, for I had left my wife so weakly that"——

I stamped my foot.

"I beg your pardon for speaking of her," he had the grace to say, "but I couldn't help slipping to the window often yesterday to look for Jenny, and when she did come and I saw she was crying, it—it a sort of confused me, and I didn't know right, sir,

what I was doing. I hit against a member, Mr. Myddleton Finch, and he—he jumped and swore at me. Well, sir, I had just touched him after all, and I was so miserable, it a kind of stung me to be treated like—like that, and me a man as well as him, and I lost my senses, and—and I swore back."

William's shamed head sank on his chest, but I even let pass his insolence in likening himself to a member of the club, so afraid was I of the sleepers waking and detecting me in talk with a waiter.

"For the love of God," William cried, with coarse emotion, "don't let them dismiss me!"

"Speak lower!" I said. "Who sent you here?"

"I was turned out of the dining-room at once, and told to attend to the library until they had decided what to do with me. Oh, sir, I'll lose my place!"

He was blubbering, as if a change of waiters was a matter of importance.

"This is very bad, William," I said. "I fear I can do nothing for you."

"Have mercy on a distracted man!" he entreated. "I'll go on my knees to Mr. Myddleton Finch."

How could I but despise a fellow who would be thus abject for a pound a week?

"I dare not tell her," he continued, "that I have lost my place. She would just fall back and die."

"I forbade your speaking of your wife," I said, sharply, "unless you can speak pleasantly of her."

"But she may be worse now, sir, and I cannot

even see Jenny from here. The library windows look to the back."

"If she dies," I said, "it will be a warning to you to marry a stronger woman next time."

Now, everyone knows that there is little real affection among the lower orders. As soon as they have lost one mate they take another. Yet William, forgetting our relative positions, drew himself up and raised his fist, and if I had not stepped back I swear he would have struck me.

The highly improper words William used I will omit, out of consideration for him. Even while he was apologizing for them I retired to the smoking-room, where I found the cigarettes so badly rolled that they would not keep alight. After a little I remembered that I wanted to see Myddleton Finch about an improved saddle of which a friend of his has the patent. He was in the news-room, and having questioned him about the saddle, I said:

"By the way, what is this story about your swearing at one of the waiters?"

"You mean about his swearing at me," Myddleton Finch replied, reddening.

"I am glad that was it," I said. "For I could not believe you guilty of such bad form."

"If I did swear"—— he was beginning, but I went on:

"The version which reached me was that you

swore at him, and he repeated the word. I heard he was to be dismissed and you reprimanded."

"Who told you that?" asked Myddleton Finch, who is a timid man.

"I forget; it is club talk," I replied, lightly. "But of course the committee will take your word. The waiter, whichever one he is, richly deserves his dismissal for insulting you without provocation."

Then our talk returned to the saddle, but Myddleton Finch was abstracted, and presently he said:

"Do you know, I fancy I was wrong in thinking that waiter swore at me, and I'll withdraw my charge to-morrow."

Myddleton Finch then left me, and, sitting alone, I realized that I had been doing William a service. To some slight extent I may have intentionally helped him to retain his place in the club, and I now see the reason, which was that he alone knows precisely to what extent I like my claret heated.

For a mere second I remembered William's remark that he should not be able to see the girl Jenny from the library windows. Then this recollection drove from my head that I had only dined in the sense that my dinner-bill was paid. Returning to the dining-room, I happened to take my chair at the window, and while I was eating a devilled kidney I saw in the street the girl whose nods had such an absurd effect on William.

The children of the poor are as thoughtless as

"I was to do like this," she replied and went through the supping of something out of a plate in dumb show.

their parents, and this Jenny did not sign to the windows in the hope that William might see her, though she could not see him. Her face, which was disgracefully dirty, bore doubt and dismay on it, but whether she brought good news it would not tell. Somehow I had expected her to signal when she saw me, and, though her message could not interest me, I was in the mood in which one is irritated at that not taking place which he is awaiting. Ultimately she seemed to be making up her mind to go away——

A boy was passing with the evening papers, and I hurried out to get one, rather thoughtlessly, for we have all the papers in the club. Unfortunately I misunderstood the direction the boy had taken; but round the first corner (out of sight of the club windows) I saw the girl Jenny, and so I asked her how William's wife was.

"Did he send you to me?" she replied, impertinently taking me for a waiter. "My!" she added, after a second scrutiny, "I b'lieve you're one of them. His missis is a bit better, and I was to tell him as she took all the tapiocar."

"How could you tell him?" I asked.

"I was to do like this," she replied, and went through the supping of something out of a plate in dumb show.

"That would not show she ate all the tapioca," I said.

"But I was to end like this," she answered, licking

an imaginary plate with her tongue. I gave her a shilling (to get rid of her), and returned to the club disgusted.

Later in the evening I had to go to the club library for a book, and while William was looking in vain for it (I had forgotten the title) I said to him:

"By the way, William, Mr. Myddleton Finch is to tell the committee that he was mistaken in the charge he brought against you, so you will doubtless be restored to the dining-room to-morrow."

The two members were still in their chairs, probably sleeping lightly; yet he had the effrontery to thank me.

"Don't thank me," I said, blushing at the imputation. "Remember your place, William!"

"But Mr. Myddleton Finch knew I swore," he insisted.

"A gentleman," I replied, stiffly, "cannot remember for twenty-four hours what a waiter has said to him."

"No, sir, but"——

To stop him I had to say:

"And, ah, William, your wife is a little better. She has eaten the tapioca—all of it."

"How can you know, sir?"

"By an accident."

"Jenny signed to the window?"

"No."

"Then you saw her, and went out, and "——

"Nonsense!"

"Oh, sir, to do that for me! May God bl——"

"William!"

"Forgive me, sir, but—when I tell my missis, she will say it was thought of your own wife as made you do it."

He wrung my hand. I dared not withdraw it, lest we should waken the sleepers.

William returned to the dining-room, and I had to show him that, if he did not cease looking gratefully at me, I must change my waiter. I also ordered him to stop telling me nightly how his wife was, but I continued to know, as I could not help seeing the girl Jenny from the window. Twice in a week I learned from this objectionable child that the ailing woman had again eaten all the tapioca. Then I became suspicious of William. I will tell why.

It began with a remark of Captain Upjohn's. We had been speaking of the inconvenience of not being able to get a hot dish served after 1 A.M., and he said:

"It is because these lazy waiters would strike. If the beggars had a love of their work, they would not rush away from the club the moment one o'clock strikes. That glum fellow who often waits on you takes to his heels the moment he is clear of the club steps. He ran into me the other night at the top of the street, and was off without apologizing."

"You mean the foot of the street, Upjohn," I said, for such is the way to Drury Lane.

"No; I mean the top. The man was running west."

"East."

"West."

I smiled, which so annoyed him that he bet me two to one in sovereigns. The bet could have been decided most quickly by asking William a question, but I thought, foolishly doubtless, that it might hurt his feelings, so I watched him leave the club. The possibility of Upjohn's winning the bet had seemed remote to me. Conceive my surprise, therefore, when William went westward.

Amazed, I pursued him along two streets without realizing that I was doing so. Then curiosity put me into a hansom. We followed William, and it proved to be a three-shilling fare, for running when he was in breath and walking when he was out of it, he took me to West Kensington.

I discharged my cab, and from across the street watched William's incomprehensible behavior. He had stopped at a dingy row of workmen's houses, and knocked at the darkened window of one of them. Presently a light showed. So far as I could see, someone pulled up the blind and for ten minutes talked to William. I was uncertain whether they talked, for the window was not opened, and I felt that, had William spoken through the glass loud

enough to be heard inside, I must have heard him too. Yet he nodded and beckoned. I was still bewildered when, by setting off the way he had come, he gave me the opportunity of going home.

Knowing from the talk of the club what the lower orders are, could I doubt that this was some discreditable love affair of William's? His solicitude for his wife had been mere pretence; so far as it was genuine, it meant that he feared she might recover. He probably told her that he was detained nightly in the club till three.

I was miserable next day, and blamed the devilled kidneys for it. Whether William was unfaithful to his wife was nothing to me, but I had two plain reasons for insisting on his going straight home from his club: the one, that, as he had made me lose a bet, I must punish him; the other, that he could wait upon me better if he went to bed betimes.

Yet I did not question him. There was something in his face that—— Well, I seemed to see his dying wife in it.

I was so out of sorts that I could eat no dinner. I left the club. Happening to stand for some time at the foot of the street, I chanced to see the girl Jenny coming, and—— No; let me tell the truth, though the whole club reads; I was waiting for her.

"How is William's wife to-day?" I asked.

"She told me to nod three times," the little slat-

tern replied; "but she looked like nothink but a dead one till she got the brandy."

"Hush, child!" I said, shocked. "You don't know how the dead look."

"Bless yer," she answered, "don't I just! Why, I've helped to lay 'em out. I'm going on seven."

"Is William good to his wife?"

"Course he is. Ain't she his missis?"

"Why should that make him good to her?" I asked, cynically, out of my knowledge of the poor. But the girl, precocious in many ways, had never had my opportunities of studying the lower classes in the newspapers, fiction, and club talk. She shut one eye, and looking up wonderingly, said:

"Ain't you green—just!"

"When does William reach home at night?"

"'Tain't night; it's morning. When I wakes up at half dark and half light and hears a door shutting I know as it's either father going off to his work or Mr. Hicking coming home from his."

"Who is Mr. Hicking?"

"Him as we've been speaking on—William. We calls him mister, 'cause he's a toff. Father's just doing jobs in Covent Garden, but Mr. Hicking, he's a waiter, and a clean shirt every day. The old woman would like father to be a waiter, but he hain't got the 'ristocratic look."

"What old woman?"

"Go 'long! that's my mother. Is it true there's a waiter in the club just for to open the door?"

"Yes, but——"

"And another just for to lick the stamps? My!"

"William leaves the club at one o'clock?" I said, interrogatively.

She nodded. "My mother," she said, "is one to talk, and she says to Mr. Hicking as he should get away at twelve, 'cause his missis needs him more'n the gentlemen need him. The old woman do talk."

"And what does William answer to that?"

"He says as the gentlemen can't be kept waiting for their cheese."

"But William does not go straight home when he leaves the club?"

"That's the kid."

"Kid!" I echoed, scarcely understanding, for knowing how little the poor love their children, I had asked William no questions about the baby.

"Didn't you know his missis had a kid?"

"Yes, but that is no excuse for William's staying away from his sick wife," I answered, sharply. A baby in such a home as William's, I reflected, must be trying, but still—— Besides his class can sleep through any din.

"The kid ain't in our court," the girl explained. "He's in W., he is, and I've never been out of W. C.; leastwise, not as I knows on."

"This is W. I suppose you mean that the child is at West Kensington? Well, no doubt it was better for William's wife to get rid of the child——"

"Better!" interposed the girl. "'Tain't better for her not to have the kid. Ain't her not having him what she's always thinking on when she looks like a dead one."

"How could you know that?"

"'Cause," answered the girl, illustrating her words with a gesture, "I watches her, and I sees her arms going this way, just like as she wanted to hug her kid."

"Possibly you are right," I said, frowning, "but William had put the child out to nurse because it disturbed his night's rest. A man who has his work to do——"

"You are green!"

"Then why have the mother and child been separated?"

"Along of that there measles. Near all the young 'uns in our court has 'em bad."

"Have you had them?"

"I said the young 'uns."

"And William sent the baby to West Kensington to escape infection?"

"Took him, he did."

"Against his wife's wishes?"

"Na-o!"

"You said she was dying for want of the child?"

"Wouldn't she raythor die than have the kid die?"

"Don't speak so heartlessly, child. Why does William not go straight home from the club? Does he go to West Kensington to see it?"

"'Tain't a hit, it's an 'e. 'Course he do."

"Then he should not. His wife has the first claim on him."

"Ain't you green! It's his missis as wants him to go. Do you think she could sleep till she knowed how the kid was?"

"But he does not go into the house at West Kensington?"

"Is he soft? Course he don't go in, fear of taking the infection to the kid. They just holds the kid up at the window to him, so as he can have a good look. Then he comes home and tells his missis. He sits foot of the bed and tells."

"And that takes place every night? He can't have much to tell."

"He has just."

"He can only say whether the child is well or ill."

"My! He tells what a difference there is in the kid since he see'd him last."

"There can be no difference!"

"Go 'long! Ain't a kid always growing? Haven't Mr. Hicking to tell how the hair is getting darker, and heaps of things beside?"

"Such as what?"

"Like whether he larfed, and if he has her nose,

and how as he knowed him. He tells her them things more'n once."

"And all this time he is sitting at the foot of the bed?"

"'Cept when he holds her hand."

"But when does he get to bed himself?"

"He don't get much. He tells her as he has a sleep at the club."

"He cannot say that."

"Hain't I heard him? But he do go to his bed a bit, and then they both lies quiet, her pretending she is sleeping so as he can sleep, and him feared to sleep case he shouldn't wake up to give her the bottle stuff."

"What does the doctor say about her?"

"He's a good one, the doctor. Sometimes he says she would get better if she could see the kid through the window."

"Nonsense!"

"And if she was took to the country."

"Then why does not William take her?"

"My! you are green! And if she drank port wines."

"Doesn't she?"

"No; but William he tells her about the gentlemen drinking them."

On the tenth day after my conversation with this unattractive child I was in my brougham, with the

Disagreeable circumstances, therefore, compelled me to take tea with a waiter's family.

windows up, and I sat back, a paper before my face lest anyone should look in. Naturally, I was afraid of being seen in company of William's wife and Jenny, for men about town are uncharitable, and, despite the explanation I had ready, might have charged me with pitying William. As a matter of fact, William was sending his wife into Surrey to stay with an old nurse of mine, and I was driving her down because my horses needed an outing. Besides, I was going that way, at any rate.

I had arranged that the girl Jenny, who was wearing an outrageous bonnet, should accompany us, because, knowing the greed of her class, I feared she might blackmail me at the club.

William joined us in the suburbs, bringing the baby with him, as I had foreseen they would all be occupied with it, and to save me the trouble of conversing with them. Mrs. Hicking I found too pale and fragile for a workingman's wife, and I formed a mean opinion of her intelligence from her pride in the baby, which was a very ordinary one. She created quite a vulgar scene when it was brought to her, though she had given me her word not to do so; what irritated me, even more than her tears, being her ill-bred apology that she "had been 'feard baby wouldn't know her again." I would have told her they didn't know anyone for years had I not been afraid of the girl Jenny, who dandled the infant on her knees and talked to it as if it understood. She

kept me on tenterhooks by asking it offensive questions: such as, "Oo know who give me that bonnet?" and answering them herself, "It was the pretty gentleman there," and several times I had to affect sleep because she announced, "Kiddy wants to kiss the pretty gentleman."

Irksome as all this necessarily was to a man of taste, I suffered even more when we reached our destination. As we drove through the village the girl Jenny uttered shrieks of delight at the sight of flowers growing up the cottage walls, and declared they were "just like a music-'all without the drink license." As my horses required a rest, I was forced to abandon my intention of dropping these persons at their lodgings and returning to town at once, and I could not go to the inn lest I should meet inquisitive acquaintances. Disagreeable circumstances, therefore, compelled me to take tea with a waiter's family—close to a window, too, through which I could see the girl Jenny talking excitedly to villagers, and telling them, I felt certain, that I had been good to William. I had a desire to go out and put myself right with those people.

William's long connection with the club should have given him some manners, but apparently his class cannot take them on, for, though he knew I regarded his thanks as an insult, he looked them when he was not speaking them, and hardly had he sat down, by my orders, than he remembered that I

was a member of the club, and jumped up. Nothing is in worse form than whispering, yet again and again, when he thought I was not listening, he whispered to Mrs. Hicking, "You don't feel faint?" or "How are you now?" He was also in extravagant glee because she ate two cakes (it takes so little to put these people in good spirits), and when she said she felt like another being already, the fellow's face charged me with the change. I could not but conclude, from the way Mrs. Hicking let the baby pound her, that she was stronger than she had pretended.

I remained longer than was necessary, because I had something to say to William which I knew he would misunderstand, and so I put off saying it. But when he announced that it was time for him to return to London, at which his wife suddenly paled, so that he had to sign to her not to break down, I delivered the message.

"William," I said, "the head waiter asked me to say that you could take a fortnight's holiday just now. Your wages will be paid as usual."

Confound them! William had me by the hand, and his wife was in tears before I could reach the door.

"Is it your doing again, sir?" William cried.

"William!" I said, fiercely.

"We owe everything to you," he insisted. "The port wine"——

"Because I had no room for it in my cellar."

"The money for the nurse in London"——

"Because I objected to being waited on by a man who got no sleep."

"These lodgings"——

"Because I wanted to do something for my old nurse."

"And now, sir, a fortnight's holiday!"

"Good-by, William!" I said, in a fury.

But before I could get away, Mrs. Hicking signed to William to leave the room, and then she kissed my hand. She said something to me. It was about my wife. Somehow I—— What business had William to tell her about my wife?

They are all back in Drury Lane now, and William tells me that his wife sings at her work just as she did eight years ago. I have no interest in this, and try to check his talk of it; but such people have no sense of propriety, and he even speaks of the girl Jenny, who sent me lately a gaudy pair of worsted gloves worked by her own hand. The meanest advantage they took of my weakness, however, was in calling their baby after me. I have an uncomfortable suspicion, too, that William has given the other waiters his version of the affair, but I feel safe so long as it does not reach the committee.

THE PLAYWRIGHT AND THE FOWL.

THIS odd story was told me in the smoking-room of the Garrick Theatre on the first night of "Lady Bountiful," the narrator being a dramatist only less popular than Mr. Pinero himself. We had been talking of the nervousness of some authors during the first performance of their plays.

"The dramatists of the past were less afraid of their public's verdict," said one of the company. "Was it not Charles Lamb who blandly joined in the hissing of his own piece?"

"That is told of him," the dramatist answered, "though I have often wondered whether he hissed very loudly. Besides, in those days the author got little for his play, while nowadays it is worth a fortune or nothing."

"Are you nervous on a first night?" someone asked him.

"Yes, my first nights are a trial to me nowadays," the playwright answered, very gloomily. "Yet there was a time when I took them calmly."

"How curious," remarked someone, "that nervousness should have come with experience."

"It is not so much nervousness," replied the play-

wright, "as a detestable self-consciousness. I have lost faith in my work, or rather in my own judgment of it. Formerly I knew if a speech or a situation would be effective, but now I can never feel certain that my best things will not be received with derision."

"How do you account for the change?"

"It all came about through my going into the country to write a play. I have never been the same man since. I left the farm-house, where I had gone for quietness, without writing the play; but the proud brute had already worked his mischief on me. I see him at this moment, I dream about him, I am always hearing him."

"What proud brute?"

"It was a fowl, a little bantam cock, that I encountered fifty times a day. Until that fowl came into my life (and marred it) I never knew what pride was. Until it took to eying me sideways I never realized what is meant by the scorn of scorns. Until it stood determinedly in my way I never felt fear. Until it strutted by me I never really knew that I was a thing of no consequence. Until it crowed at me I never felt that I was found out and despised. I assure you, that exasperating fowl had an effect on my health as well as on my work."

"Never mind your health. How did it affect your work?"

"Disastrously. You know that scene in the domestic drama where"——

"But what domestic drama?"

"Oh, in all domestic dramas, where the smooth villain, after being spurned by the heroine, shows himself in his true colors, and is repulsed by her with the haughty words, 'Ah, now I know you! Stand back, and let me pass!' Well, that was a situation I used to come out strong in—I always *knew* it would go. But the hateful fowl has altered all that. On a first night I sit in my box in anguish, feeling that the situation will be laughed at. You see it all depends on the actress's capacity for drawing herself up and looking very haughty. But haughtiness at once brings that bantam before my eyes. No woman, however great a genius she may be, can draw herself up quite so proudly as that fowl did, and while she is drawing herself up I see not her but it. I tremble lest the audience remembers the fowl also."

"In the next scene," continued the unfortunate playwright, "the heroine is usually shown in poor lodgings. The machinations of the villain has sent the hero, her husband, to jail, or to the wars, and the villain reappears to press his suit. She has her little child with her; and the child, refusing to favor his friendly advances, runs to her mother. I used to have absolute faith in that scene, but a cold sweat breaks out on me now when the curtain rises on it."

"The bantam again?"

"Yes, the bantam! At the farm I soon despaired of getting round the brute itself, but I tried to make friends of some chickens by flinging them crumbs. Instead of accepting the crumbs they fluttered their wings and ran to the bantam, which stood in the middle of them, looking at me precisely as the young mother in the domestic drama looks at the villain. The stage direction for the lady is 'Regards him with the air of a queen,' and the air of a queen is very much the air of a king, which, again, is a mere copy from the air of a bantam cock. In the play the foiled villain retires grinding his teeth, just as I used to retire from the presence of that fowl. When the villain reaches the door he turns round to say something blood-curdling, and the lady answers him with a look of contempt. It was with such threats that I left the bantam, with such contempt that he received them. Then take the last scene in the play. If it is a room, there is a door—centre, as we say technically; and if it is an open-air scene there is a rustic gate, centre. Well, the villain is having everything his own way. The lady believes her husband to be dead, and meditates marrying the villain (who has persuaded her that he is virtuous) for the sake of her child. The villain walks triumphantly to the gate, centre, when suddenly the hero enters, centre. The crushed villain falls back down stage, where a policeman enters

L. 1 E. in time to slip the handcuffs on him. There is no safer ending to a domestic drama than that, and if what preceded had given satisfaction I used to feel that all was well. But it is an agonizing scene to me now. There was a gate in the farm-yard, where I constantly met the bantam. For the moment I had forgotten the brute. I was off to fish, full of hope and merry, when suddenly there was that fowl eying me, just as the hero eyes the villain. I can assure you that no villain on the stage falls back from virtue more precipitately than I retreated from the bantam. How can I sit composedly through the first night of my plays when it seems to me that at the end of every dramatic speech and in the middle of every situation I hear cock-a-doodle-doo?"

THE "FOX-TERRIER" FRISKY.

About a month ago I saw in the street an open carriage containing a fox-terrier. In its efforts to express its contempt for a passing car, the dog barked itself over the side of the carriage on to the curbstone. Next moment I saw the carriage draw up, and the coachman alight as if to look for something. What this something was I never discovered, for I had picked up the poor little dog and gone home with it. There was a collar round its neck with some writing on it, which I did not think myself justified in reading. To this collar I subsequently took a dislike, and I destroyed it. I have since thought that the dog may have belonged to the owners of the carriage.

Thus strangely did I become owner of a fox-terrier, which, as one may say, came unsolicited to my door. The romantic manner in which the little waif claimed me for its master touched my heart, and as I wanted a fox-terrier, at any rate, I had not the cruelty to turn it away. In justice to myself I should say that I wanted the dog for another.

Having explained to my landlady how the little animal had followed me home, I proceeded to train

it. The first difficulty was to get hold of it, for if I followed it to one side of the room it retired to the other side. An onlooker might have thought that we were playing at a parlor game. I sat down by the fire to smoke until the dog behaved better, and then the man in the next house took to interfering. There was only a wall between him and me, and we were not friendly because once, when he coughed for more than a week, I sent him a request to stop it. I suppose he heard me and the dog exchanging greetings, for he knocked through the wall, as if a disturbance in my room was any affair of his. The dog barked every time he thumped, and so they went at it until the training of my faithful follower recommenced.

The dog would not let me go to it, but it came to me when I offered it food, and if I could have continued feeding it night and day, it would never have left my side. Thus early in its career it showed a sagacity that promised intellectual attainments of a high order. These promises were never fulfilled.

Dogs being, it is said, reasoning animals, I thought I would give this one a chance of fixing on its own name. I wrote a number of names on slips of paper and put them into the coal-scuttle, which is always empty, though my landlady says she is always filling it. I invited the dog to select whichever name he preferred. Only a few days before I had read of a dog which, being re-

quested to christen itself out of a coal-scuttle, picked out a slip without a moment's hesitation; but my dog was either fastidious or had no longer any interest in the matter when it discovered that the pieces of paper were not biscuits, for it merely put its nose into the coal-scuttle and then withdrew. I have come to the conclusion that it looked upon a name as something not worth burdening itself with, for so long as I had it, it answered to no name if I had not a biscuit in my hand, and to any name if I was so provided. One day my landlady, who also experimented with the dog, came up and told me she thought it liked to be called "Frisky." I remembered that the word "Frisky" had been on the collar, and I thought to myself, perhaps this dog has had a previous owner who called it "Frisky." This, of course, was merely a guess, but it was worth experimenting upon, so I said "Frisky" to the dog, and immediately it came to me. Then the landlady called "Frisky," and it ran to her. We were in high glee, but unfortunately I have ever been of a suspicious nature, and I was not absolutely convinced. So I experimented further. I called "Frisket" to the dog, and it not only ran to me, but wagged its tail. Thus were my unhappy suspicions confirmed. The dog only answered to the name "Frisky" because it sounded like "Biscuit."

I have already said that there is a low character who lives next door to me. A few days after the

dog followed me home this person sent me a letter. It was only an envelope containing a scrap of paper, but I knew that it came from him. The scrap of paper said: "Lost in ——— Street, February 4th, a fox-terrier; collar on neck with address. Apply, ———. Note.—Police are instituting inquiries." Why the gentleman next door sent me this I cannot say. My impression, however, is that he wanted to annoy me. I could, of course, have handed him over to the authorities, but I remembered that some day he might have a wife and children. In the circumstances I thought it better to let his insinuations pass, and tell my landlady to keep the dog indoors. Owing to some oversight I left the newspaper scrap on my mantelpiece, where my landlady read it. She turned red as she did so, and indeed looked so guilty that for a moment there flashed through my mind the horrid thought, What if she stole this dog? The suspicion was unworthy of me, so I took the advertisement from her and sternly asked her to fill the coal-scuttle. When she returned the scrap of newspaper was gone, nor have I seen it since.

This dog which I had taken from the street, where I found it starving, brought me annoyance from various sources. I wanted a fox-terrier for a lady, and naturally I was anxious that it should be a gentle animal. Despite all I had done, the dog was never gentle to me, repeatedly taking me by the

ankles. Entirely owing to this dog, I have at present to write with my left hand. It was equally vicious with my landlady, and once, when I forgot to call it back (not that it would have minded me), it bit the man next door. Having read a great deal about the dogs, however, I knew that though argumentative with men and landladies, they are often everything that could be desired with ladies and children. I had unfortunately no opportunity of trying the dog with ladies, but my landlady had a baby. Fearing that she might not be willing to lend the child for purposes of experiment, I waited till she left the house one day, when I proceeded to her apartments, where the infant lay. I lifted it up by the waistband and carried it carefully to my room, where for safety I deposited it in the coal-scuttle, which was empty as usual. Then I introduced the dog and baby, and awaited results. Whether the dog would have behaved as they do in books, or have resented the baby's not being a biscuit, will never be known, for at that moment my landlady returned. When she saw the child in the coal-scuttle (this being the only time that coal-scuttle was ever full) she said things which I disdain to repeat.

I forget whether it was now, or after the receipt of an insulting letter, that I began to wonder what would be the best way of getting rid of the dog. The letter said, "It will be the worse for you if you

do not return within three days the dog you stole." The note was unsigned, but I recognized the writing as that of the person who disgraces our respectable neighborhood. Of course I scorned his insinuation, and openly defied him; but the dog, I now saw, would not suit, and I cannot be expected to turn my room into a home for lost dogs. I therefore determined to do without this dog.

Two friends came to see me that evening, and they got to know at once that I now kept a dog. I told them that I had reasons of an entirely private nature for wanting to sell the dog, and pointed out the beauties of this one to them. They said, however, that they did not want a dog, and they would not even take this one for nothing. I tried to make it run after them, feeling that they ought to have a dog, but the ungrateful little brute would not go. Next morning a letter from my anonymous correspondent awaited me at the breakfast-table. It said simply, "This is your last day." In a court of justice this could have been proved to be a threat of murder, though it had also another interpretation. I snapped my fingers, both hands, at my contemptible neighbor, who evidently did not know the kind of man he had to deal with. Then I went out with the dog. We proceeded toward the address given in the advertisement about the lost dog. It had struck me as just possible that the dog which followed me home was the dog that had been lost.

Possibly my neighbor meant to imply this, but if so, why did he not put it more plainly? Of course, had I thought for a moment that he meant to call me a thief, I would have proceeded against him at once.

I went to the address referred to, and asked the servant who answered the bell whether this dog was like the one that had been lost. She said it was the same, whereupon I explained briefly how it had followed me home. The servant entreated me to come in, as her master would like to see me. Doubtless she meant that he wanted to reward me, but I desired no reward; I merely wanted to do my duty, and I walked away very quickly from the door. I have not been bribed to make this statement.

THE FAMILY HONOR.

I.

Much of the story of the Glendowie Monster, now on the tongues of all in the North who are not afraid to speak, has been born of ugly fancies since the night of September 4, 1890, when that happened which sent the county to bed with long candles for the rest of the month. I was at Glendowie Castle that night, and I heard the scream that made nigh two hundred people suddenly stand still in the dance; but of what is now being said I take no stock, thinking it damning to a noble house; and of what was said before that night I will repeat only the native gossip and the story of the children, which I take to be human rather than the worst horror of all, as some would have it. Thus I am left with almost naught to tell save what I saw or heard at the Castle on the night of September 4th; and to those who would have all things accounted for it will seem little, though for me more than enough.

There are those in Glendowie who hold that this Thing has been in the castle, and there held down by chains, since the year 1200, when the wild Lady

Mildred gave it birth and died of sight of it; and in the daylight (but never before wine) they will speak the name of her lover; and so account for 1200 A.D. being known in the annals of that house not as a year of our Lord but as the year of the Devil. I am not sufficiently old-fashioned for such a story, and rather believe that the Thing was never in the castle until the coming home from Africa of him who was known as the Left-Handed Earl, which happened a matter of seventy years ago. The secret manner of his coming and the oddness of his attendants, with a wild story of his clearing the house of all other servants for fifteen days, during which he was not idle, raised a crop of scandal that has not yet been cut level with the earth. To be plain, it is said by those who believe witchcraft to be done with that the Left-Handed Earl brought the Thing from Africa, and in fifteen days had a home made for it in the castle—a home that none could find the way to save himself and a black servant who frequently disappeared for many days at a time, yet was known always to be within whistle of his master. Men said furtively that this Thing was the heir, and again there was the Devil's shadow in the story, as if the Devil could be a woman.

Half a century ago the Left-Handed Earl died, and they will tell you of a three days' search for a minister brave enough to pray by the open coffin, and that in the middle of the prayer the mourners

rose to their feet and ran out of the room, because of something squatting on the corpse's chest. There are many such stories of the Thing, against which all who might have seen shut their eyes so quickly that no two drew the same likeness. But this is no great matter, for what they saw I will not tell, and I would that none had ever told me.

There have been four earls since then, but, if the tale of the Thing be true, not one of them lawful earl. Yet until September 4, 1890, since the time of the Left-Handed Earl, it has always been the same black servant who waited on the Thing, so that many marvelled and called these two one, as they were not. Of the earls I have nothing to tell that could not be told by other men, save this, that they paced their halls by night, and have ever had an air of listening not to what was being said to them, but as if for some sudden cry from beyond. And I have heard tell that though brave men in war, they would not go into a dark place: even for a wife, which was the bribe offered to one of them.

It is not a pretty story, except for what is told of the Monster's love of children; and though until September 4, 1890, I never believed what was told of the Thing and these children, I believe it now. What they say is that it was so savage that not even the black servant could have gone within reach of it and lived; yet with children scarce strong enough to walk, save on all-fours, it would play for hours even

as they played, but with a mother's care for them. There are men of all ages in these parts who hold that they were with it in their childhood and loved it, though now they shudder at a picture they recall, I think, but vaguely. And some of them, doubtless, are liars. It may be wondered why the lords of Glendowie dared let a child into the power of one that could have broken themselves across its knee; and two reasons are given: the first, that it knew when there were children in the castle, and would have broken down walls to reach them had they not been brought to it; the other, that compassion induced the earls to give it the only pleasure it knew. Of these children some were of the tenantry and others of guests in the castle, and I have not heard of one that dreaded the monster. To them it ever seems to have been lovable; and if half of the stories be true they would let it toss them sportively in the air, and they would sit with their arms round its neck while it made toys for them of splinters of wood or music by rattling its chains. I need not say that care was taken to keep these meetings from the parents of the children, in which conspiracy the children unconsciously joined, for their pleasant prattle of their new friend allayed suspicion rather than roused it. Nevertheless, queer rumors arose in recent times, which I dare say few believed who came from a distance; yet were they sufficiently disquieting to make guests leave their children at

home, and, as I understand, on September 4, 1890, several years had passed since a child had slept in the castle. On that night there were many guests, and one child, who had been in bed for some hours when the Thing broke loose.

II.

THE occasion was the coming of age of the heir, and seldom, I suppose, has there been such a company in a house renowned for hospitality. There were many persons from distant parts, which means London, and all the great folk of our county, with others not so great in that gathering, though capable of making a show at most. After the dancing begins no man is ever a prominent figure in a room to those who are there merely to look on, as I was; and I now remember, as the two whom my eyes followed with greatest pleasure, our hostess, a woman of winning manners yet cold when need be, and the lady who was shortly to become her daughter, a languid girl, pretty to look at when her lover, the heir, was by her side. I know that nearly all present that night speak now of a haggard look on the earl's face, and of quick glances between him and his wife; I know they say that the heir danced much to keep himself from thinking, and that his arm chattered on the waists of his partners; I know the story that he had learned of the existence of the

Thing that night. But I was present, and I am persuaded that at the time all thought, as I did, that never was a gayer scene even at Glendowie, never a host and hostess more cordial, never a merry-eyed heir more anxious to be courteous to all and more than courteous to one. The music was a marvel for the country. Dance succeeded dance. The hour was late, but another waltz was begun. Then suddenly——

And at once the music stopped and the dancers were as still as stone figures. It had been a horrible, inhuman scream, so loud and shrill as to tear a way through all the walls of the castle; a scream not of pain but of triumph. I think it must have lasted half a minute, and then came silence, but still no one moved: we waited as if after lightning for the thunder.

The first person I saw was the earl. His face was not white but gray. His teeth were fixed, and he was staring at the door, waiting for it to open. Some men hastened to the door, and he cast out his arms and drove them back. But he never looked at them. The heir I saw with his hands over his face. Many of the men stepped in front of the women. There was no whispering, I think. We all turned our eyes to the door.

Some ladies screamed (one, I have heard, swooned; but we gave her not a glance) when the door opened. It was only the African servant who

entered, a man most of us had heard of but few had seen. He made a sign to the earl, who drew back from him and then stepped forward. The heir hurried to the door, and some of us heard this conversation:

"Not you, father; me."

"Stay here, my son; I entreat, I command."

"Both," said the servant, authoritatively; and then they went out with him and the door closed.

The dancing was resumed almost immediately. This is a strange thing to tell. Only a woman could have forced us to seem once more as we were before that horrid cry; and the woman was our hostess. As the door closed my eyes met her; and I saw that she had been speaking to the musicians. She was smiling graciously, as if what had occurred had been an amusing interlude. I saw her take her place beside her partner, and begin the waltz again with the music. All looked at her with amazement, dread, pity, suspicion, but they had to dance. "Does she know nothing?" I asked myself, overhearing her laughing merrily as she was whirled past me. Or was this the woman's part in the tragedy while the men were doing theirs? What were they doing? It was whispered in the ball-room that they were in the open, looking for something that had escaped from the castle.

An hour, I dare say, passed, and neither the earl nor his son had returned. The dancing went on,

but it had become an uncanny scene: every one trying to read the other's face, the men uncomfortable as if feeling that they should be elsewhere, many of the women craven, only the countess in high spirits. By this time it was known to all of us that the door of the ball-room was locked on the outside. Guests bade our hostess good-night, but could retire no further. One man dared request her to bid the servants unlock the door, and she smiled and asked him for the next waltz.

About two o'clock in the morning many of us heard a child's scream, that came, as we thought, from the hall of the castle. A moment afterward we again heard it—this time from the shrubbery. I saw the countess shake with fear at last, but it was only for a moment. Already she was beckoning to the musicians to continue playing. One of the guests stopped them by raising his hand; he was the father of the child.

"You must bid your servants unbar that door," he said to the countess, sternly, "or I will force it open."

"You cannot leave this room, sir ——," she answered, quite composedly; and then he broke out passionately, fear for his child mastering him. Something about devil's work he said.

"There is someone on the other side of that door who would not hesitate to kill you," she replied; and we knew that she spoke of the native servant.

"Order him to open the door."

"I will not."

In another moment the door would have been broken open, had she not put her back against it. Her eyes were now flashing. The men looked at each other in doubt, and some of them, I know, were for tearing her from the door. It was then that we heard the report of a gun.

It is my belief that the countess saved the life of Sir —— by preventing his leaving the ball-room. For close on another hour she stood at the door, and the servants gathered round her like men ready to support their mistress. We were now in groups, whispering and listening, and I shall tell what I heard, believing it to be all that was heard by any of us, though some of those present that night now tell stranger tales. I heard a child laughing, and I doubt not that we were meant to hear it, to appease the parents' fears. I heard the tramp of men in the hall and on the stairs, and afterward an unpleasant dirge from above. A carriage drove up the walk and stopped at the door. Then came heavy noises on the stair, as of some weight being slowly moved down it. By and by the carriage drove off. The earl returned to the ball-room, but no one was allowed to leave it until daybreak. I lost sight of the countess when the earl came in, but many say that he whispered something to her, to which she replied "Thank God!" and then fainted. No

explanation of this odd affair was given to the company; but it is believed that the Thing, whatever it was, was shot that night and taken away by the heir and the servant to Africa, there to be buried.

THE WICKED CIGAR.

COUNT TOLSTOÏ has a well-considered and temperate paper in the *Contemporary Review* for February 1891, on the effects of smoking. He maintains that tobacco makes fiends of men, and cites several well-known cases in which murderers could not do the deed until they had smoked a cigarette. That tobacco fires us to villany there can be no doubt, I think. That is why I smoke.

All the villains I know smoke. It is notorious that publishers take a few whiffs before drawing up the agreement which they send to authors to sign. I observe that when the Irish members were meeting in Committee Room No. 15, they retired at intervals to the smoking-room. Could we divide them into smokers and non-smokers, we should know for certain which are the real patriots. The following, I have reason to believe, is the true history of the American Copyright bill: The English Authors' Society bribed the doctors of America to forbid the legislators there to smoke. Then the bill was passed at once. A hitch has since occurred, however. The explanation is that the American publishers forwarded a cigar (Regalia, full-flavored) to

each member of the Senate. The critics smoke all the time they are reviewing my books. Nearly every editor smokes. The editor of the *Illustrated London News* does not smoke. So he says.

For my own part, I should give up smoking gladly if I could discover any easier way of feeling villanous. As it is, I must be a villain now and again, for two reasons. One is that, in the course of business, I have to meet publishers and editors. They smoke when they know I am coming, and I smoke because I know they are smoking. The other day, for instance, I called on the editor of *Black and White*. I had brought my natural character, the name of which is Amiability, with me; but as I was about to enter the office I hastily drew back, remembering the type of man with whom I had to deal. I hurried to the nearest tobacconist's shop, took three whiffs, and then kept my appointment with the editor. It is thus that authors prime themselves for business. Of course, if editors and the like were willing to give up smoking, we should be delighted to do so too, and meet them as honest men.

I have spoken of another reason for smoking. It only holds with novelists. People sometimes ask me why all novelists are such depraved characters, and my reply (if any) is that the novelist who respects his art must smoke. The critics frequently say of a novelist that he does not get inside a certain character. If you have the pluck to read the

novel as well as the review of it, you will find, five times in six, that it is the villain whom the novelist does not get inside of. In other words, the novelist has not smoked. To draw a character well an author must sympathize with him—must, for the time being, identify himself with him. Now, there is only one way of getting in touch with a villain. You must smoke. If the villain is merely the victim of circumstances, an occasional cigarette is sufficient. A villain who in the last chapter hears the Christmas chimes, bursts into tears, and is willing to begin a new life in Canada, can also be done on cigarettes. On the other hand, a pipe is needed for the lady adventuress (especially if she smokes herself); nor can one hope on cigarettes to get inside a villain with two wives. Cigars may be avoided, except where the villain is at the very top of his profession. Thackeray made Becky Sharp out of Manillas, but had to take to Cabañas (Maduro) for the chapters about Lord Steyne. I have been told that Mr. Christie Murray becomes very dejected when he has to write of rascals, as the smell of tobacco, not to speak of its taste, is most offensive to him. "Why don't you tell us more of shady life in Simla?" some one said recently to Mr. Kipling. "My dear sir," he replied, "I can't be always smoking." Mr. Payn doubtless learned to smoke while writing "Lost Sir Massingberd."

The much-discussed "unhappy ending" question is merely a matter of tobacco, for if the novelist did not smoke he could never kill any of his characters. It is true that female novelists occasionally end their stories unhappily, and yet are not themselves smokers (unless they belong to the gifted new school). But on inquiry you would find, I expect, that these ladies have villanous husbands or brothers. When the author feels that she must end her story sadly, she doubtless asks the nearest villain to come into her room and smoke while she writes. If you find a man smoking in a conservatory he will give, as his reason, that tobacco kills the insects which are in league to destroy his wife's flowers. Count Tolstoï should have drawn attention to this wholesale murder. He might have compared the husbands in the conservatory to the husbands in their wives' writing-rooms, smoking their utmost, to the destruction of doomed heroes and heroines. It has been pointed out frequently that the wives of geniuses have their troubles, but so have the husbands of geniuses. If the lady's genius takes the form of fiction, her husband, as we have seen, is compelled to be a villain, that he may help her on with her work. The male novelist, however, is his own villain. I never heard of a male genius so lost to all sense of shame that he ordered his wife to sit beside him and smoke while he put some inoffensive character in his story to death. It is notorious that

the wives of novelists are untiring in their efforts to hide their husbands' tobacco-pouch; but is this because they would save their husbands from villany? Those who are in a position to decide say not. Their story is that the wife of the novelist is in plot with the editor in whose magazine the novel appears. Editors never sleep at nights, from a fear that their novelist means to end his story unhappily, and so decrease the magazine's circulation. They accordingly warn his wife that unless the heroine and hero marry in the last chapter they will never again invite her husband to write for them. What can the poor lady do? She has the housing and clothing of her children to think of, and therefore she conceals her husband's tobacco, knowing that he will not have the cruelty to separate his lovers, unless there is a pipe in his mouth. We are constantly reading in the papers that "Mr. Dash, the well-known novelist, has left London for a quiet fishing village on the east coast, where he intends to finish the story upon which he is at present engaged." The public has no understanding of the significance of this paragraph, but the editor shudders when he reads it. He translates it thus: "Mr. Dash, the novelist with a sneaking fondness for unhappy endings, has escaped for a fortnight from his wife's control, and is now smoking heavily in a fishing village whose name he is keeping secret. We understand that Mr. Dash, who had promised to end

his new story happily, has changed his mind, and decided to kill the hero and heroine in each other's arms."

I need say no more, except that I smoked a cigarette before writing this article.

THE RESULT OF A TRAMP IN SURREY.

POSSIBLY I am a little old-fashioned in my views of professional courtesy. At any rate, when Watson and Miller suggested a tramp through Surrey from Dorking to Sheire in honor of May Day, I consented, on the understanding that it was to be a tramp and nothing more. If I had thought that either of them proposed making an article out of it, I would have stayed at home. For one thing, it was not fair to me (who trusted them), and for another, I fail to see why pressmen should be unable to enjoy Nature without making copy of her. That Miller and Watson felt they were meditating a mean thing is proved by the fact that each kept his intentions to himself. Whether either suspected the other, I cannot say, but it is a pleasure to me to know that I had implicit trust in both until I caught them in the act. Mine is not a suspicious nature, but they do not seem to know that there is such a thing in journalism as *esprit de corps*. At least Watson does not, for, as you will see, he shows even worse than Miller. It is painful to expose even one's friends, but still I don't mind doing it.

Where possible, it is my custom to combine pleasure with business; and my intention was to write a light, readable paper on our walk, putting it in such a form that I could make a background, so to speak, of Miller and Watson, who have some laughable points about them that would amuse newspaper readers. Of course I said nothing of this to them because, as already mentioned, I trusted them. Had I suspected for one moment that either of them intented an article, I would have written mine that night, after I returned home, so that theirs would have been too late. That, as you will learn, was what Watson did, I suppose because he mistrusted Miller; for though I may, for all I know, have my faults, to steal a march on my friends is not one of them. Perhaps my idea of the perfect gentleman is too fine for common use, though I try to live up to it. How true is it that each of us makes himself the measures of his surroundings. Being without guile myself, I anticipated none from Miller and Watson. They, on the other hand, having unworthy designs in their minds, suspected each other.

Watson having forestalled me in a way that does him little credit, I shall say nothing of our walk. Suffice it that we drank in the ozone of the Surrey hills and dined pleasantly at Sheire, I unsuspecting, believing them as loyal to me as I to them, and drawing them out in the hope that they would say

a few good things. We parted in the evening at Charing Cross, without either of them saying a word of his mean intentions, and next forenoon I wrote about half of my article. Owing to Watson's perfidy that article is merely waste paper, though the description of the pine-woods and the roar of the wind among the trees were both prettily done. The little bit about the kitten, which followed Watson through Sheire, too, would have made him as ridiculous in the eyes of the public as it did to the villagers. However, there is no use thinking of that now, I merely mention it, because it suggests the kind of man Watson turns out to be. I meant to finish my article before I went to bed, but in the evening I went to see Miller, who lives near Willesden. He was in his bedroom, which opens off his sitting-room, when I arrived, and instead of coming forward politely to welcome me, as I would have done had he called on me, he shouted out in his brusque way, "Oh, is it you, Ogilvy? sit down." This rudeness on the part of Miller—for I can call it nothing else—found him out, for as I looked about me for something to do (that is, for his cigar-case) I caught sight of two pieces of paper on the table. Now I am the last person in the world to give way to curiosity, but seeing that there was writing on both sheets, I took a look at them. In a flash I saw what Miller was after. The man who called himself my friend, had basely deceived

me; and here was the damning evidence of his guilt. The one paper consisted of notes about our tramp in Surrey; on the other he had actually begun his article, or rather tried several beginnings. I could not have believed it had I not seen it with my own eyes. One attempt began: "To the jaded Londoner, who breathes smoke instead of air, what can be pleasanter than a tramp across ——." There was another: "It has been frequently observed that God made the country, while man made the town. I felt this with a new force on May Day when——" Again: "Thanks to our much-abused railway system, the pine-woods of Surrey have become a suburb of London. Here the jaded——" Lastly: "With the advent of summer, the dweller in cities casts his longing eyes——" As for the notes, they showed Miller in an even baser light. One of them was "Ogilvy and the kitten—touch it up a little;" so that it was evidently Miller's intention to say that the kitten at Sheire followed me! The "touch it up a little" too, suggested a depth of moral depravity that I had never dreamed of in Miller. I had just time to replace the papers on the table before he came in, and when he saw them, conscience made him blush. He thrust them into his pocket hastily, and then looked at me suspiciously, as if I had any interest in his papers. I hate these unworthy suspicions, but of course I said nothing. Several times that evening Miller asked me what I had been

doing with myself all day. A striking illustration this of the way in which suspicion haunts the guilty mind. Of course I did not tell him.

"Been writing anything particular?" he asked, with affected carelessness.

"Nothing particular," I answered, though the deceit of the man exasperated me. Perhaps you ask why I sat on. That is easily answered. In the circumstances, I need not say Miller's company (which is at no time very enlivening), was more a pain than a pleasure to me, but on the other hand I knew he wanted me to go. Most fortunately I was aware of Miller's many weaknesses, of which one is a habit of taking things leisurely. I felt that if I stayed with him till ten o'clock, he would not write his article that night. So I stayed till ten and then hurried home to finish my article. This seemed the best way of punishing Miller for his duplicity. Here I would again call the reader's attention to the fact that I had still absolute faith in Watson. A less generous mind would have reflected that if the one friend abused my confidence, so might the other. But I wrote and posted my article, suspecting no guile.

Consider the pain with which I got the article back next day, with the accompanying note from the editor: "Dear Mr. Ogilvy: I am sorry to have to return this, but I received by an earlier post a very similar paper about a Surrey tramp from Mr. Wat-

son, which is now in the printers' hands." It is difficult to recall without prejudice a scene in which one has himself played a prominent part, and undoubtedly there was a scene in my chambers on receipt of this communication. Nevertheless, I am quite certain that shame was my uppermost feeling; shame to think that Watson could have done this thing—I was pained, cut to the heart. If it had been any other, I would not have minded, but it was hard that the blow—the stab in the back—should have been given by Watson, from whom I have never had a secret. I was wondering whether I had better go to Miller's when the bell rang, and next moment Miller bounced into the room. He had a newspaper in his hand. "Was it you who wrote this?" he cried.

"Wrote what?" I asked, whereupon he pointed to an article—Watson's article—on a tramp in Surrey. It annoyed me to think that Miller could suspect me, even for a moment, of such an underhand proceeding. I told him so. He begged my pardon, and we gripped hands; but, of course, I was less warm than Miller, for I knew all the time that with him it was merely a case of selfish disappointment. On that head, however, I said nothing, so we made common cause against Watson. First we read over his article carefully, and among its minor blemishes picked out four mixed metaphors, a misquotation, a clear case of plagiarism, and some very

clumsy English. How any editor could have printed such a paper surprised both of us, but more especially me, as I, of course, knew that he had another much better one which he could have used instead. Its style, however, was the article's least offence. If Watson was to be so mean as to make an article out of what was intended to be merely a relaxation, he might have done it decently. Instead of confining himself to the tramp and the scenery we passed through, he, with execrable taste, held up his companions to ridicule, and had the effrontery to incorporate into his paper the remarks which he had drawn out of us at the Sheire inn. Miller was especially annoyed, because it was said that the kitten already mentioned followed him. That I consider a trifle, and not worth making a fuss about. To-night we mean to call on Watson together and tell him what we think of him, though, of course, I cannot help feeling that Miller is every whit as bad as Watson. I thank my conscience that I, at least, am not the kind of man who would make an article out of his friends.

MY HUSBAND'S BOOK.

Long before I married George I knew that he was dreadfully ambitious. We were not yet engaged when he took me into his confidence about his forthcoming great book, which was to take the form of an inquiry into the Metaphysics of Ethics. "I have not begun it yet," he always said, "but I shall be at it every night once the winter sets in." In the daytime George is only a clerk, though a much-valued one, so that he has to give the best hours of his life to a ledger.

"If you only had more time at your disposal," I used to say, when he told me of the book that was to make his name.

"I don't complain," he said, heartily, like the true hero he always is, except when he has to take medicine. "Indeed, you will find that the great books have nearly always been written by busy men. I am firmly of opinion that if a man has original stuff in him it will come out."

He glowed with enthusiasm while he spoke in this inspiriting strain, and some of his ardor passed into me. When we met we talked of nothing but his

future; at least he talked while I listened with clasped hands. It was thus that we became engaged. George was no ordinary lover. He did not waste his time telling me that I was beautiful, or saying "Beloved!" at short intervals. No, when we were alone he gave me his hand to hold, and spoke fervently of the Metaphysics of Ethics.

Our engagement was not of a very long duration, for George coaxed me into marriage thus—"I cannot settle down to my book," he said, "until we are married."

His heart was so set on that book that I yielded. We wandered all over London together buying the furniture. There was a settee that I particularly wanted, but George, with his usual thoughtfulness, said:

"Let us rather buy a study table. It will help me at my work, and once the book is out we shall be able to afford half a dozen settees."

Another time he went alone to buy some pictures for the drawing-room.

"I got a study chair instead," he told me in the evening. "I knew you would not mind, my darling, for the chair is the very thing for writing a big book in."

He even gave thought to the ink-bottle.

"In my room," he said, "I am constantly discovering that my ink-bottle is empty, and it puts me out of temper to write with water and soot. I there-

fore think we ought to buy one of those large ink-stands with two bottles."

"We shall," I replied, with the rapture of youth, "and mine will be the pleasant task of seeing that the bottles are kept full."

"Dearest!" he said, fondly, for this was the sort of remark that touched him most.

"Every evening," I continued, encouraged by his caressing tones, "you will find your manuscripts lying on the table waiting for you, and a pen with a new nib in it."

"What a wife you will make!" he exclaimed.

"But you mustn't write too much," I said. "You must have fixed hours, and at a certain time, say at ten o'clock, I shall insist on your ceasing to write for the night."

"That seems a wise arrangement. But sometimes I shall be too entranced in the work, I fancy, to leave it without an effort."

"Ah," I said, "I shall come behind you, and snatch the pen from your hand!"

"Every Saturday night," he said, "I shall read to you what I have written during the week."

No wonder I loved him.

We were married on a September day, and the honeymoon passed delightfully in talk about the book. Nothing proved to me the depth of George's affection so much as his not beginning the great work before the honeymoon was over. So I often

told him, and he smiled fondly in reply. The more, indeed, I praised him the better pleased he seemed to be. The name for this is sympathy.

Conceive us at home in our dear little house in Clapham.

"Will you begin the book at once?" I asked George the day after we arrived.

"I have been thinking that over," he said. "I needn't tell you that there is nothing I should like so much, but, on the whole, it might be better to wait a week."

"Don't make the sacrifice for my sake," I said, anxiously.

"Of course it is for your sake," he replied.

"But it is such a pity to waste any more time," I said.

"There is no such hurry," he answered, rather testily.

I looked at him in surprise.

"What I mean," he said, "is that I can be thinking the arrangement of the book over."

We have, of course, a good many callers at this time, and I told most of them about the book. For reasons to be seen by and by I regret this now.

When the week had become a fortnight, I insisted on leaving George alone in the study after dinner. He looked rather gloomy, but I filled the ink-bottles, and put the paper on the desk, and handed him his new pen. He took it, but did not say thank you.

An hour afterward I took him a cup of tea. He was still sitting by the fire, but the pen had fallen from his hands.

"You are not sleeping, George?" I asked.

"Sleeping!" he cried, as indignantly as if I had charged him with crime. "No, I'm thinking."

"You haven't written any yet?"

"I was just going to begin when you came in. I'll begin as soon as I've drunk this tea."

"Then I'll leave you to your work, dear."

I returned to the study at nine o'clock. He was still in the same attitude.

"I wish you would bring me a cup of tea," he said.

"I brought you one hours ago."

"Eh? Why didn't you tell me?"

"Oh, George! I talked with you about it. Why, here it is on the table, untouched."

"I declare you never mentioned it to me. I must have been thinking so deeply that I never noticed you. You should have spoken to me."

"But I did speak, and you answered."

"My dear, I assure you I did nothing of the sort. This is very vexing, for it has spoiled my evening's work."

The next evening George said that he did not feel in the mood for writing, and I suppose I looked disappointed, for he flared up.

"I can't be eternally writing," he growled.

"But you haven't done anything at all yet."

"That is a rather ungenerous way of expressing it."

"But you spoke as if the work would be a pleasure."

"Have I said that it is not a pleasure? If you knew anything of literary history, you would be aware that there are occasions when the most industrious writers cannot pen a line."

"They must make a beginning some time, though!"

"Well, I shall make a beginning to-morrow."

Next evening he seemed in no hurry to go into the study.

"I'll hang the bedroom pictures," he said.

"No, no, you must get begone to your book."

"You are in a desperate hurry to see me at that book."

"You spoke as if you were so anxious to begin it."

"So I am. Did I say I wasn't?"

He marched off to the study, banging the drawing-room door. An hour or so afterward I took him his tea. He had left his study door open so that I could see him on the couch before I entered the room. When he heard the rattle of the tea-things he jumped up and strode to the study table, where, when I entered, he pretended to be busy writing.

"How are you getting on, dear?" I asked, with a sinking at the heart.

"Excellently, my love, excellently."

I looked at him so reproachfully that he blushed.

"I think," said he, when he had drunk the tea, "that I have done enough for one night. I mustn't overdo it."

"Won't you let me hear what you have written?"

He blushed again.

"Wait till Saturday," he said.

"Then let me put your papers away," I said, for I was anxious to see whether he had written anything at all.

"I couldn't think of it," he replied, covering the paper with his elbows.

Next morning I counted the clean sheets of paper. They were just as I had put them on the table. So it went on for a fortnight or more, with this difference. He either suspected that I counted the sheets, or thought that I might take it into my head to do so. To allay my suspicions, therefore, he put away what he called his manuscript in a drawer, which he took care to lock. I discovered that one of my own keys opened this drawer, and one day I examined the manuscripts. They consisted of twenty-four pages of paper, without a word written on them. Every evening he added two more clean pages to the contents of the drawer. This discovery made me so scornful that I taxed him with the deceit. At first he tried to brazen it out, but I was merciless, and then he said:

"The fact is that I can't write by gas-light. I fear I shall have to defer beginning the work until spring."

"But you used to say that the winter was the best season for writing."

"I thought so at the time, but I find I was wrong. It will be a great blow to me to give up the work for the present, but there is no help for it."

When spring came I reminded him that now was his opportunity to begin the book.

"You are eternally talking about that book," he snarled.

"I haven't mentioned it for a month."

"Well, you are always looking at me as if I should be at it."

"Because you used to speak so enthusiastically about it."

"I am as enthusiastic as ever, but I can't be forever writing at the book."

"We have now been married seven months, and you haven't written a line yet."

He banged the doors again, and a week afterward he said that spring was a bad time for writing a book.

"One likes to be out-of-doors," he said, "in spring, watching the trees become green again. Wait till July, when one is glad to be indoors. Then I'll give four hours to the work every evening."

Summer came, and then he said:

"It is too hot to write books. Get me another bottle of iced soda-water. I'll tackle the book in the autumn."

We have now been married more than five years, but the book is not begun yet. As a rule, we now shun the subject, but there are times when he still talks hopefully of beginning. I wonder if there are any other husbands like mine.

Who is sometimes to be found in his arm chair, by the fire, toying with a lady's shoe.

A LADY'S SHOE.

I.

After it is too dark to read, save to those who will travel to their windows in search of light, a man I know is sometimes to be found in his arm-chair, by the fire, toying with a lady's shoe. He is a bachelor —whimsical you will say—and how that frayed shoe became his I know not; for often though he has told me, the tale is never twice the same. When such is his odd mood, he will weave me strange histories of the shoe, and if I would be sad they are sportive, and when one makes me merry he will give it a tragic ending, for such is the nature of the man. Sometimes he is not consistent, which, he quaintly explains, is because he has only one of the shoes; and he will argue that so-called inanimate objects accustomed to the married life, such as shoes and gloves and spectacles, mourn the loss of their mate even as Christians do, which he proves, should I smile, by asking whether, though previously hard workers, they are ever, if separated, of much more use in the world. Nor is that the only hard question he asks me; for when I tell him that all his

stories of the shoe cannot be true, he demands of me which of them is necessarily false, and then I have no answer. Perhaps you, too, will be dumb to that question after you have listened to me, if such be your pleasure, while I repeat a little of what he tells me in the twilight, as we sit by the fire looking at the little bronze shoe.

II.

A HUNDRED and one years, and six months ago, says my friend, who is scrupulously exact about dates where they are of no consequence, that shoe and its partner got their first glimpse of the world. They sat all day in a shoemaker's window in the Strand, looking out upon the great fair which human beings provide for the entertainment of the articles that have the luck to get a seat in shopkeepers' windows, instead of being hung up inside on strings, or hidden away in boxes. They were a very dainty pair, made for the feet of some Cinderella with a godmother, and many ladies stopped to look at them who passed St. Paul's without giving it a glance. But there was a little dressmaker who loved these shoes as no other loved them, and she stood admiring them so often that they got to know her and wondered why she did not come in and buy. You see they had as yet no knowledge of the world, and thought that a trumpery dressmaker ought

to have them, just because she had such pretty little feet. They did not understand that beautiful shoes are not for feet that fit them, but for purses that can buy them.

She was not so very little, this dressmaker who hungered for the tiny bronze shoes; but she was only a girl, and she had to sew for her life all day and often all night, and that, my friend says, is why he calls her the little dressmaker. I suppose he means that she was so small compared to the big foes a poor girl has to fight in London. But though she was poor, she was not unhappy. She not only made pretty dresses out of rich material for fine ladies, such as the shoes were meant for, but pretty, cheap frocks for herself, in which she was delightful to look at. A really pretty girl always looks best in something at twopence-halfpenny the yard, and really plain ones look their worst in silk and velvet. These, be it noted, are my friend's views. The little dressmaker never quite rose to them. She often smiled with satisfaction when she saw herself in a mirror; but as often she sighed over her sewing, wishing she could see herself in the fine brocades that were meant for my Lady Mary. As it is the duty of all women to look as nice as possible, the little dressmaker cannot be blamed for wishing sometimes that she had five thousand a year. Had she had that sum, her first purchase would have been the shoes. She often thought of them at nights,

and looked at her pretty feet and counted her money, and then shook her head mournfully.

The little dressmaker had only one relative in the whole wide world, and he was a boy of twelve, six or eight years younger than herself. He was her brother, and they lived together in a shabby room that looked bright, for no other reason than because these two loved each other. Will ran errands for anyone who would employ him, and he had such an appetite that he often felt compelled to apologize for it. The little dressmaker could have bought the shoes to which she had given her heart, had she not known that the consuming desire of Will was to possess a certain magnificent knife.

"How absurd of Will," the little dressmaker often said to herself, "to want that ugly knife. What can he do with it, except cut his fingers?"

At these times she could not help comparing boys to girls, and thinking that the desires of her own sex were much more reasonable, for what could be more natural and proper than to pine for the loveliest pair of bronze shoes?

Will knew why his sister often gazed at these shoes, and he would smile at her infatuation.

"How foolish girls are!" was his comment to himself. "No sensible person could see that knife without wishing to own it; but what does it matter whether one wears pretty shoes or ugly shoes, or even no shoes at all?"

Next day, notwithstanding, she was back at the window.

Nevertheless, these two loved each other, and Will would have liked his sister to get the shoes, if only he could get the knife as well. The little dressmaker loved Will even more than that, and was determined that he should have the knife, though she had to give up the shoes.

Can you see her at the shoemaker's window, looking at the shoes, and then at her own feet, until she felt certain that all the Strand was laughing at her? Once she went into the shop and asked the price of the shoes. She came out scared. Next day, notwithstanding, she was back at the window, with the money in her possession, and it almost compelled her to go in and buy. She had to run away. After that she left the money at home, lest it should some day drag her into the shop.

She tried to avoid the Strand altogether, but still her feet took her there against her will, for you cannot conceive how anxious they were to step into those little bronze shoes.

The little dressmaker, who was the most unselfish of women, despised herself for her vanity, and thought to be happy again by buying the knife without delay. Then the shoes would be beyond her reach as completely as if some great lady had bought them.

"Here is the money for the knife, Will," she said, bravely, one day, and Will grasped the money, which was in many pieces, all earned with toil.

"But the shoes?" Will said, repressing his desire to rush out for the knife.

"I don't care about them," his sister said, turning her head away.

"It is not," Will said, uncomfortably, "as if you had no shoes. Those are nice ones you are wearing now."

They were not really nice ones. It was quite a shame that such pretty feet should be libelled by them. But these were matters Will did not understand.

"All one wants of shoes," he said, "is that they should have no holes in them."

"That is all," answered the little dressmaker, with a courageous smile, and she spoke of the knife with such interest that Will set off to buy it, convinced that she no longer cared about the shoes. Forgetting something, however, he turned back for it, and behold, he found the little dressmaker in tears. You must not blame her. It was quite a big sacrifice she had made, and therefore, though she was crying, she was not very unhappy. Unselfishness is the best cure for trouble. Will, of course, did not realize this. He suddenly remembered that, though they were so poor, he seemed to get everything he wanted very much, while she seemed to get nothing. He was stricken with remorse, and said craftily that he wanted her to come with him to buy the knife. Well, she went with him, and presently she

discovered that it was not the knife he meant to buy.

"Oh, Will," she whispered, trembling, "I won't have the shoes. I want you to get the knife."

"Pooh," said Will, grandly, "I don't care to have the knife. What use do I have for it?"

"You will make me wretched, Will," the little dressmaker said, "if you buy the shoes. These I have are quite nice ones."

"You are to have the shoes," replied Will, firmly. "No one could look so pretty in them as you will do."

"Oh, Will, have you noticed?" faltered the little dressmaker, meaning had Will noticed that her feet really were made for lovely shoes.

"Of course I have," answered Will, not at all understanding what she was referring to.

"But I can't spend so much money on myself," she said.

"It is my money now," said Will, triumphantly, "and I am to give you the shoes as a present."

Feeling like a man, he requested her to take his arm, and so they advanced along the Strand, making quite a gallant show for such wayfarers as could read faces. Alas! they reached the shop too late. The shoes were gone. An hour earlier they had been bought by an heiress, for whom they were too small. The shopkeeper had pointed this out to her courteously, but she, too, had fallen in love with the

pretty shoes, and her only answer to him was, "I buy them: I undertake to get into them." Now we must leave the sad little dressmaker and follow the fortunes of the shoes.

III.

I INTERRUPTED my friend at this point, saying, "It is the little dressmaker I am interested in; not the shoes. Tell me more of her."

"She vanished out of my knowledge at that point in her history," he answered, "I don't know what became of her."

"A story-teller," I complained, "has no right to close his tale so abruptly. It is his duty to leave nothing to the public's imagination."

"Mine," he said, "is not a story, it is only something that happened, and I warned you that I did not know the end. In real life you never get the end of a story, but you can guess it if you will."

"Then," I said, "I guess that the little governess——"

"Had more severe disappointments in after life than the loss of a pair of shoes," he said.

"But had a happy future," I broke in, almost entreating him to say the words. "When her brother became a man he gave her a pretty house in the suburbs to be mistress of, and she was as happy as——."

"As Ruth Pinch," he suggested; "no, I think Will

married, and left the little dressmaker alone in the shabby room."

"Until she married, you mean?"

"Or until," said my friend, very sadly, "she was damned to all eternity that a gentleman might have his pleasure."

"Don't say that," I implored.

"The little dressmaker is dead," he answered, "and the worms have eaten her long ago, so it does not matter much." Then he looked at me sharply: "If I cannot give the story an end," he said, "I can at least give it a moral. When I was in your house yesterday I found a pale little governess teaching your children, and I thought (forgive me) that you were somewhat brusque to her. She was the little dressmaker over again. Ah, sir, that is what I mean when I say that the stories in real life have no ending! The brave little dressmaker is still in London; you brush against her in every street, you meet her in scores of houses. Remember that little bit of her history, and you will help to make her next scene brighter. And now I must tell you of her who bought the shoes and took them to Gretna Green, and of how they entirely altered her future because they were a size too small. This time the story has an ending, or what passes for such in a world of make-believe. It is about a grandfather of mine, too, whose marriage, as you shall hear, was entirely arranged by this shoe."

IV.

Miss May Gregory, the heiress into whose possession the shoes passed, was a lovely creature on a somewhat large scale, and having only lately left school, she was desperately anxious to be married. So anxious was she, that matrimony was the first consideration, and the man only the second. She had two lovers, whom she called Jack and Tom, and she was so fond of both that she would have married either. Her papa, who knew her pretty well, said she was a sentimental goose, and he was so feared by both Jack and Tom, that when they heard his voice in the stilly night asking who that was playing the guitar beneath his daughter's window, they leaped the orchard wall and ran.

"You can't marry both," Mr. Gregory explained to Miss May; "and as they would only make a man between them, it is obvious that you marry neither. No tears, please, and let me hear less nonsense about love; whoever heard of a girl's loving two men at once?"

Miss May thought her papa very unfeeling, and pointed out that, of course she only loved one of them. Her tragedy was that she could not decide which one.

My own idea is that they were so very much alike that a lady could not be indifferent to the one and

love the other. But I am a bachelor, and often wonder how young ladies can choose a young man out of so many young men of the same pattern and hold him higher than the rest. Financially Jack and Tom were easily distinguished, however. Jack had ready money but no prospects; Tom had prospects (he said) but no ready money. You may be sure that Miss May considered this no difference at all. She had sufficient money and prospects for both herself and her husband, whichever one he should prove to be.

Though it was in London that Miss May bought the shoes, it was in a provincial town that she first tried to get into them, the town where she and her severe papa lived. She was going to the theatre that night, and to Gretna Green afterward, if the fates proved friendly. It was her father who was to take her to the theatre, and Jack who was to take her to Gretna Green. The arrangements had been made cleverly, as you will see.

For nearly half an hour did the carriage wait at the door before Miss May was ready to step into it. When she at last joined her father, who was fuming, for he detested being late for the play, her face was red. I wish I could say that this was because she was blushing or had been crying over the impropriety of the contemplated runaway marriage. But it was not. Miss May was merely red in the face because her fight with the shoes had been protracted.

She had gained a momentary triumph, however, for, in her own words, she had "got into them." True they pinched and made her stumble in her walk, but she had only to walk a few yards to the carriage and another few yards from the playhouse door to a box.

I have forgotten what the play was; it was, probably, one of the dull comedies that are now esteemed and edited because they are old. Many people were crowding into the house, and in the vestibule stood Jack, who made a sign to his lady that all was well. Then he disappeared without being seen by the father he was hoodwinking. Tom was less fortunate. That is to say, the father did see him. He was also more fortunate, however, for he had a few moments' talk with Miss May. That lady ought not, perhaps, to have let Tom know that she was coming to the play to-night. She was really Jack's now, or about to be, if the plot did not miscarry. But was it not natural that she should feel sorry for Tom? That day she had sent him back his letters (he used to slip them into her hands, and she kept them in a box beside Jack's letters), with an intimation that all was now over between them. She had also added that she was going to the play that night, and I suppose her reason for this injudicious act was that she looked forward to a delightfully sad parting with him. But Miss May had not quite understood Tom. In the crush at the

theatre she held out her hand (the one further from her papa) that Tom might squeeze it surreptitiously. Thus did she hope to break the blow. But frantic Tom would have none of her hand. He stalked after her into the box, and in the presence of her father demanded an explanation. Miss May, who was already beginning to wish that she had never seen those lovely little bronze shoes—they were hurting her so much—wept at Tom's grief and admired him for his vehemence. As for the father, he was first amazed, secondly delighted, and thirdly afraid. It was pleasant to him to hear that his daughter was determined to be done with the youth, but disquieting to observe that the whole house was listening to Tom's declamation. Tom promising to lower his voice, papa consented to leave the box for five minutes that the farewells might take place in privacy.

In that five minutes the second last act of a tragedy was played in the back of the box. Tom announced that his prospects were now death by his own pistol. Miss May, in terror, put her hands on his shoulders; and then, remembering Jack, withdrew them. She had promised Jack not to say a word of the conspiracy to Tom, but now it all came out. At half-past nine a written note was to be handed in to Miss May, purporting to come from an aunt of hers who was in a box beneath. The note was to ask her and her papa to join the aunt. Papa loathed the aunt, and was therefore certain to

refuse; but he would let Miss May go. In the lobby she was to be joined by Jack, whisked into a carriage that was already waiting near the theatre door, and borne off in the direction of Gretna Green. There was quite a chance of the runaways being twenty miles off before the chase began.

"So farewell, Tom, dear Tom," said Miss May. But dear Tom, forgetting his promise to papa, began to stamp, calling her the most horrid names, and thus delighting her.

"You know how I could love you," she said, picking her tenses carefully. "But am I to blame if you are so poor?"

"You could wait for me. My prospects——"

"I can't wait, Tom; good-by. Kiss me, Tom, for the last time."

"I won't. You are a heartless coquette. May, if that carriage had been mine, would you have come with me?"

"I—I don't know."

Men should not distress women with such difficult questions.

"Kiss me, Tom, for the last time."

"I won't."

Then, like a sensible man, Tom changed his mind, and kissed her passionately.

"It is not for the last time," he said, fiercely. "May, you love me, and me alone, and Jack shall

not have you; he shall not. I have an idea; quick, tell me how I shall know Jack's carriage?"

Miss May, wondering, had just began to answer him, when papa reappeared. Tom departed, but not with the look of a hopeless man on his face. As for the young lady, having treated dear Tom so kindly, she naturally began to think lovingly of dear Jack.

V.

THE ruse with the letter succeeded. Miss May was trembling a little when she left the box. Had her papa flung her a kind word just then she might have postponed the elopement; but he asked her grumpily why she was looking at him so sentimentally, and, of course, after that she hesitated no longer. He little thought as the door closed on her that the next time they met she would be a married woman.

Miss May always maintained afterward that from the moment when she left her father's box until she realized that she was in a carriage beside Jack, all was a blank to her. The theatre attendant, however, who saw the carriage drive off, and described the scene subsequently to the infuriated father, declared that she was less agitated than her lover.

"I suppose Jack carried me down that dark street to the carriage," was Miss May's surmise.

"The gentleman was a little excited-like, but the

lady she were wonderful cool," was the attendant's declaration. His story ended thus:

"They had started, when the lady she gave a scream, and the carriage stopped, and the gentleman he jumped out and looked for something in the street. He got it, too, and then he jumps in beside her again, and off they go at a spanking rate. I don't know what it was; something she had dropped, most likely."

To his dying day this man was denied the small pleasure of knowing what Jack jumped out of the carriage to pick up. It was one of the shoes. Miss May's feet had been protesting so vigorously in the theatre against further confinement in their narrow prison house that with one foot she had pressed the shoe half off the other. In the street the shoe fell off and Jack had to find it, for although in Scotland one may marry in a hurry, one's feet must be properly shod. So Miss May thought then, but she was presently to discover that a pair of shoes are a convenient possession rather than indispensable.

Through the greater part of the night the carriage rolled northward, but at last an inn (now, I believe, a private house) was reached, where they had to wait three hours for fresh horses. Miss May had a bedroom, but did not sleep a wink (she said), while the nervous Jack paced up and down in front of the inn, listening for horses in pursuit, and thinking he heard them every five minutes.

If a man can be too gentlemanly, that man seems to have been Jack throughout this escapade. Until he could claim her as his wife, he would not take even what she called formal liberties. He sat on the seat opposite her. He paid her no compliments; he addressed her as Miss Gregory, which had not been his custom. Of course, she admired this delicacy, but still——

The journey was resumed with early light, and now, as they stepped once more into their carriage, both of the runaways looked hard at one of the postilions.

"Surely, you are not the man I engaged yesterday?" Jack said to him.

"No, my lord," answered the fellow, composedly; "he were took ill, and offered me his place. No offence intended, my lord. I have been on this here kind of job before."

"You have been to Gretna Green before?"

"Raythe r."

"You will do as well as another. Drive on."

Miss May said nothing to the man, but she thought a good deal about him. Despite his dark hair and sallow complexion, despite his boorish manners, she thought him very like Tom. It was Tom in disguise. He had bribed the real postilion, and here he was on his way to Scotland with the woman he wanted to marry, but by no means certain how he was to get her.

Within twenty miles of the border there is a hillock which commands an extensive view. It is close to the old high road, and many a man bound for Gretna Green has run up it to see whether his pursuers were in sight. Jack was one of the number. He was not gone many minutes, but in the meantime Tom had found an opportunity of revealing himself to the lady.

"May," he said, appearing so suddenly by her side that she screamed, "don't you know me? I am Tom. May, dearest, you said you would marry me if I could take you to Scotland. I am doing it."

"Oh, Tom!" wailed Miss May, all in a tremble (as she said afterwards), "I never made any such promise. I am to marry Jack."

"Never!" cried Tom. "May, darling May——"

"Tom, Tom!" said Miss May, reproachfully, "why did you come to disturb my peace of mind, when everything was going on so nicely?"

"Love of my life!" began Tom, then kissed her hand and resumed his seat beside the other postilion. He had seen Jack running back.

"We are pursued," Jack said, as he drew near, panting, "by two men on horseback, and one of them, I am convinced, is your father."

The carriage rolled on more quickly now than ever, and for the next half-hour Miss May thought little of which of her lovers she should marry. Her new fear was that she would not be able to marry at

"Love of my life," began Tom, then kissed her hand.

all. Jack was as polite as ever. Certainly Tom had been less delicate. He had called her his darling, he had kissed her hand. He should not have taken these liberties, but still——

In vain were the jaded horses of the runaways whipped up. The pursuers gained on the carriage until, when the latter was within half a mile of the border, they were not four hundred yards behind.

"There is only one chance for us, May," said poor Jack, forgetting in his excitement that she was not May, but Miss Gregory; "we must leave the carriage at the next turn of the road which hides us from view."

"And be overtaken in a moment!" cried Miss May, aghast.

"I hope not," said Jack. "Listen, dear, to what I propose. At the next turn I will stop the carriage, and you will at once jump out with me. I will tell our fellows to drive on as fast as they can, and you and I will conceal ourselves until your father and his companion have galloped past. They will pursue the carriage. In the meantime you and I will cross these fields to the village, whose lights I see plainly, and there the blacksmith will marry us."

"They will overtake the carriage in a few minutes," the lady said, "and finding it empty, hurry on to Gretna Green. Why, we shall find them waiting for us there."

"We shall not," answered Jack, triumphantly, with his head out at the window. "I see two roads before us, of which the one evidently leads to Gretna Green, and the other to the right. I will tell our fellows to take the latter; that will give us a good start."

Jack stopped the carriage and assisted his lady out, at the same time shouting directions to the two men. "Stop!" he cried to them, as they were driving off. "One of you come with me; we may need a witness." Tom jumped down. The carriage drove on. The two men and the woman hid. The horsemen, of whom Mr. Gregory was purple with passion, raced by them.

"And now for Gretna Green on foot!" said Jack, giving Miss May his arm.

They hurried on, but—the shoe! Miss May had this time no maid to help her, and the shoe was but half on. She was sliding her foot along the ground, rather than lifting it. By and by, when they were not a hundred yards from the old toll-house, which is just on the other side of the border, Miss May sank to the ground, crying, "I can go no further; I have lost one of my shoes!"

There was no time to look for the shoe in the twilight.

"Assist her to that cottage," said Jack to the supposed postilion, pointing to the toll-house, "and I will hasten on to the village and bring the black-

smith back with me. Ask them to hide her, if need be. You will be well paid."

So saying, Jack ran on, while Tom obeyed his injunctions to the letter. With Miss May's assistance he explained the position to the toll-keeper, who grinned when he heard that the bridegroom was running to Gretna Green for the blacksmith.

"You English," he said, "think that there is but one man in broad Scotland who can make a couple one in a hurry, and you call him the blacksmith, though he is no blacksmith at all. If your lover, honey, had stopped here, I should have had you spliced by this time."

"Is that true?" cried Tom, while Miss May stared.

"I have married scores in my time," the old man answered. "Why, I married half-a-dozen this week."

"But is it legal?" asked May.

The toll-keeper smiled.

"Try it, honey," he suggested.

Then it was Tom's turn to speak.

"May," he said, in a tone of conviction, "this is providential. Old gentleman, marry us as quickly as you can. Get your family as witnesses, if witnesses are necessary."

The toll-keeper looked at the lady.

"No, no," she said, "I promised Jack. Oh, Tom, how I wish there had been only one of you!"

For half an hour did Miss May refuse to listen to

what Tom called reason. Then she started up, for she was sure she heard the gallop of horses.

"Tom!" she cried.

So she and Tom were married. Jack and Mr. Gregory arrived at the toll-house five minutes afterward, but it was all over by that time.

VI.

THUS my friend ended his story, adding that his grandfather had come out of the affair victorious.

"So that your grandfather was Tom?" I said.

"If," he replied, coolly, "you think Tom was the victor."

"Well, he got her."

"And Jack did not. But perhaps Jack was the luckier man of the two."

"Then was Jack your grandfather?"

"I won't say. I leave it to you to decide which was victorious, the one who got her or the one who lost her."

"It must have been Tom. You told me that your grandfather's marriage was entirely arranged by a shoe."

"Yes, I said so, but both of their marriages were arranged by a shoe, for Jack subsequently married another lady, and, of course, it was the shoe that led to his marrying her instead of Miss May."

"At least," I said, "Tell me which of the two shoes this is."

"That would be telling all," he replied, "for Tom retained possession of the shoe in which Miss May was married, and Jack found the other one next morning. To tell you which shoe this is would be to tell you which man was my grandfather. Can't you guess? I have told you he was the one who had reason to be thankful that the lady became Mrs. Tom. Now, which one was that?"

Reader, which do you think?

WAS IT A WATCH?

EVEN before my trouble with it, Farquhar's was no ordinary watch. Cumming expressed the general opinion when he said it was a watch that would make any man thoughtful. Without going into its history, I may say that Farquhar got it originally from a deputation of another man's admirers, who presented it to him by mistake. From the first it seems to have required a good deal of study.

Although he had a pride in it that would have been beautiful had the object been more worthy, Farquhar was not given to ostentatious boasting about his watch. Until it became the subject of common talk, he never knew, I am convinced, that it was different from other people's watches. He had owned it for some time before I became cognizant of its remarkable properties. One day Farquhar and I took such a long walk that we had to remain in a village all night. We had a double-bedded room. Some time after midnight I was awakened by strange noises, and thought at first that Farquhar was groaning in his sleep. I shouted out to him to sleep like a Christian or leave the room. He made

no answer, but the noise stopped, and I fell over again. In a short time I was again wide awake. There was no noise, but I was sure that something in the room had wakened me. Instead of addressing Farquhar once more I lay very still, and by and by the noises were resumed. They resembled the distant creaking of chains, and came in jerks with intervals of half a minute between them. The room was in the blackness of night, but I still felt sure that Farquhar was the offender, and from the noise I thought I could calculate the place where he was lying. I reached my arm down to the floor and at last my groping fingers touched a slipper. This I flung, as I believed, at Farquhar as hard as I could. Then I listened. The slipper hit some hard object and fell on the floor, but Farquhar did not waken. The noise had ceased. As I lay listening I gradually became aware of another sound from the opposite side of the room. Undoubtedly it was Farquhar breathing heavily. This made me sit up. Evidently Farquhar's bed was not where I thought. As a consequence Farquhar was not responsible for these maddening sounds. No cat could have made them. While I sat pondering the creaking began again. I became nervous, but jumped out of bed and made my way to Farquhar's head. I shook him awake, and then told him to listen. He listened. The noise stopped, began again, stopped, began again. "I don't hear anything," said Farquhar,

but he spoke sulkily, and I had to think that either I was a fool or he was shamming. I preferred to disbelieve Farquhar. However, he insisted that he heard nothing, and as neither of us had any matches, I had to grope my way back to bed. I thought I might stifle the noise by burying my head in the blankets, but I was too wide awake for that. Every few minutes I uncovered my head to listen, and soon again I heard the creak, creak. Farquhar was either asleep again, or pretended to be so, for I spoke to him in vain. At last I got up, put one foot into the remaining slipper, and, with the other foot bare, began to search for the culprit. The room was mostly carpeted with wax-cloth, but my wrath kept me warm. I felt my way to the spot from which the noise seemed to proceed, and soon I was passing my fingers over a chest of drawers. It was a fearsome hunt, but I was not in the mood to be alarmed. Putting my ear to the drawers I listened, and in this way I came in time to the conclusion that the noise proceeded from a top drawer. I pulled it out and heard a very loud creak, creak. For a moment I hesitated about putting in my hand, but courage came to me. The drawer was empty except for one object. I took a firm grip of it. It was a watch. It must be Farquhar's watch. Soon I was at Farquhar's bed, shaking him again, and now he confessed. "I put it into the drawer to deaden the sound," he said, "because I thought it might disturb

you. I never hear it myself, but other men have been disturbed by it in the night."

He would give me no more satisfaction, and at last went off to sleep again. I stood wondering what I should do with the watch, and at one time I thought of flinging it out of the window. In the end, however, I put it out at the door, and after that I had some sleep.

Since then I have seldom talked to Farquhar about his watch when he and I were alone. If there are a number of us together, however, we ask him the time. He would hand the watch round if in a sociable mood. It was a silver watch, and many persons who have examined it are of opinion that it was the first watch. Farquhar has been advised to take it to the British Museum. Of the various theories propounded with regard to it, one of the most curious was that it was not a watch at all. This was the suggestion of a foreigner who has travelled over nearly all the earth and has seen queer things. Very possibly, he says, it is only something made in the form of a watch, and what that something is Farquhar may discover unexpectedly any day. My own opinion, however, is that it is a watch.

Perhaps because he never had any other watch, Farquhar would not have recognized that there was anything peculiar about his watch had not his friends made it the subject of so much discussion.

When we asked him, in a matter-of-fact voice, what time it was, he pulled out his watch and began his calculations cheerfully. He never knew precisely how he arrived at his conclusions, for we were not in the secrets of his watch. While he gazed at it, however, he murmured things to himself, which some took for incantations, although the better informed recognized them as arithmetical problems. I knew, though I cannot say how I knew it, that he had first to decide whether his watch was slow or fast to-day. Some held that it was fast on Mondays, Wednesdays, and Saturdays, and slow on the other days of the week, but the calculation, I am convinced, was more elaborate than that. At such a time he would glare fixedly into vacancy, as if trying to tame a wild beast by the power of the human eye. He was really thinking back to the key, so to speak, to his watch. I have never seen anyone so distressed with thought, unless perhaps a man who has offered to show the company a trick with cards and suddenly fears that he has forgotten the way. Once Farquhar knew whether his watch was fast or slow, his face cleared, and we were aware that he had reached comparatively smooth water. It was now merely a question of addition and subtraction, and he would even ask us how much twenty-five and seventeen made, or what was over after you took eighteen from forty. Despite these questions, however, his method was always a mystery, and we could not help feeling

proud of him, when ultimately he gave us the time to a minute. There was no vulgar ostentation about him when he gave us the solution. He went through his calculations as if all watches were like his, and it was only when we raised a slight cheer that he realized that we had been getting up an entertainment.

Then, indeed, he became as indignant as a sensitive man might be whose pipe had been held up to derision. Light talk about his watch he took as an insult to himself, and sometimes he would not argue. He could argue, however, about his watch, generally in a series of angry barks. The curse of life, he said, was that nowadays it had no variety. We (his hearers) were so much alike that he could only distinguish us by our clothes. He said we did the same things in the same way; he knew what to expect of us with as much certainty as he knew that the bell would ring if he pulled the cord. In short, we were like our watches, all on the same plan, all going one way, and all going at the same rate. It was very different with his watch. It possessed a distinct individuality. Who, he would like to know, cared for a dog that would answer any stranger's call? Yet our watches were like such a dog. They would be as true to any other owner as to us; the moment they changed pockets they were subservient to a new master. His watch, on the other hand, was part of himself. His forefingers

were of immense use to him, but suppose them cut off, would they be an atom of service to any other body? It was exactly so with his watch. If it were stolen, he would at least have the satisfaction of knowing that the thief could make nothing of it.

It may have been noticed that I have spoken of Farquhar's watch in the past tense. This is because he has another watch now. I have also said that I had a little trouble with the watch. It was in this way. Farquhar had never let us open his watch to examine the works, or to see if it had any, and, though I am not inquisitive about other people's affairs, I thought I would like to look into the watch. I got my opportunity one evening in his rooms, when he fell asleep while I was talking to him. Very softly I got his watch out of his pocket and off the chain, and opened it with the point of his bread knife, and was trying to bend one of the wheels into its proper place—for I understand watches—when something went wrong. There was a whirring of wheels, as if the watch were at last giving vent to its pent-up emotion. I laid it down in alarm, and then observed that the hands were going back and forward, gesticulating violently, like a man hailing a bus. When the watch had subsided a little, I thought I might venture on winding it up. Unfortunately while I wound I was watching the sleeper, and suddenly something went crack in the inside of the watch. I put it to my ear. It had

stopped, and though I tried it with marmalade and struck it, nothing would make it go again. I paused to think. Knowing Farquhar well, I was aware that if he knew the particulars he would not scruple to say that I had broken the main-spring. To obviate all unpleasantness I thought the wisest course would be to replace the watch in his pocket, from which he thinks it has never been removed except by himself.

Farquhar has never worn his watch since, none of us can tell why. He has an idea that something must have happened to it, but he avoids the subject. He has bought a gold watch that keeps excellent time, and though formerly he was never too early or too late for an appointment, he now misses his train at least twice a week.

"THE MAN FROM NOWHERE."

In his delightful book, "The Trials of a Country Parson," Dr. Jessop says: "I cannot expect to be envied; but surely it is not such a very heavy calamity for a man never to catch sight of *Truth* or the *World*, or to find that there is not such a thing as an oyster-knife in his parish." Dr. Jessop, therefore, does not know—and there must be many others in his happy plight—that these two society papers made themselves at one time a debating society for discussing Mr. Rudyard Kipling, "The Man from Nowhere," as he then called himself. "That everybody knows Mr. Kipling's books" was the *World's* argument, and "That nobody ever heard of Mr. Kipling" was *Truth's*. As a result, while the *World* and other papers thought Mr. Kipling such a celebrity that they vied with each in describing the tags of his bootlaces, *Truth* and other papers talked contemptuously of log-rolling.

At the time of the *World-Truth* debate Mr. Kipling was a novelist who, six months previous, was almost quite unknown in this country. Therefore, his detractors seemed to urge, it is absurd that he can be a great man already. No, said his admirers,

it is only remarkable, and therefore worth making a greater shout over. They certainly shouted so loudly as to justify the other side in calling him, not the Man from Nowhere, but the Man with many Friends. But to his friends let this folly be charged, not to him. Even if he did take their indiscriminate eulogies a little complacently, can we, with any generosity, blame a young man for liking to hear his work extolled? Whether Mr. Kipling has influential friends is a small matter. The great question is, Can he write? To which my own answer is that no young man of such capacity has appeared in our literature for years.

The suddenness of Mr. Kipling's rise is to be accounted for by the circumstances in which his books were written. He is an Anglo-Indian, and in India the stories which we have only now an opportunity of reading have been known for a long time. Anglo-Indians were revelling—or should have been—in Mulvaney and Ortheris years before we ever heard of them. So prolific was Mr. Kipling, while still little more than a boy, that he came to England the other day the author of eight books. Not all of these are as yet accessible to our public, but we have only to take up any one of them to realize that there are two Bret Hartes in the world.

One of them is a book of verses, called "Departmental Ditties," and it is not the best. Mr. Kipling is too much of a cynic (as yet) to be a poet, and

a good many of his ditties are only spirited doggerel. His political verse is chiefly remarkable for bad taste, which unfortunately characterizes (as yet) even his prose productions. The latter are published in a somewhat unfortunate form which shows them to the least possible advantage. The largest of his books published is "Plain Tales from the Hills," and it is a collection of many stories, the scene of which is always laid in India. About half of this book would be better cut out, not because it is without merit, but because the other half is too good to be weighted by matter indifferent by comparison. Mr. Kipling is at his best when treating of Tommy Atkins in India, and of the natives. He shows meanly when writing cynical little tales of Anglo-Indian life, for though these are well enough for the columns of society journals, their view of life is contemptible, and their insight into the springs of human action seldom rises above "smartness." The native sketches, which read marvellously true, ought to go into the book "In Black and White," and the stories about Mulvaney and Ortheris, with "Soldiers Three," and some charming stories in *Macmillan's*, should make a book by themselves. Then, instead of having to look here and there for it, we would have the best of Mr. Kipling in two volumes.

But it will well repay anyone who appreciates a brilliant style, masterly character-sketching, and

quaint humor, together with a pronounced gift of story-telling, to read the books as they are. Some of Mulvaney's reminiscences and reflections are worth turning a whole library upside down to get at. Mulvaney is a private of enormous experience, the sworn friend of two other privates, Ortheris, a cockney, and Leeroyd from Yorkshire. Had he been able to keep from "the dhrink" he would certainly have got his commission, for he is a man of parts; as it is, he is an inimitable story-teller—always a fine animal, and for moments something better. One may question whether Lever ever drew such a jewel of an Irishman, for even Mickey Free is only a glorious caricature, and Mr. Kipling avoids burlesque. Mulvaney is obviously the author's favorite among his characters, but Ortheris is not drawn with less skill; indeed, out of Dickens, there is hardly a cockney of the costermonger class to place beside him. One of Mr. Kipling's complete triumphs, too, is gained with Ortheris. Now and again he seeks to give a touch of pathos to Mulvaney, but Mr. Kipling is too cynical to be sure of himself when he would be tender, and Mulvaney's sentiment scarcely rings true. But there is genuine pathos walking hand in hand with humor in "The Madness of Private Ortheris," a gem of a story, in which the cockney loses his head as he thinks of the delights of low life in London, among which (for he is far away in India) is the smell of rotten fish.

Here we have a flash into the causes that may make deserters of brave soldiers. It is only one of a hundred fine touches. Leeroyd is not drawn with much subtlety. He is only a stolid block, useful as a butt, but we never see the man inside the animal's body.

Mulvaney and Ortheris are undoubtedly Mr. Kipling's chief achievement as yet, and he cannot go on writing of them forever. Will he last? some critics are asking, and for my part I think he will. One would be reluctant to believe that a writer could begin so well, and then stop. It may be hoped that his cynicism (which is not Thackeray's, but rather that of one who rejoices in being a cynic) will be shaken off, and that then his characters will have souls. Though his style is most picturesque and effective, it runs riot at times, and he is so anxious to be startling that he is occasionally disgusting. "Whin I roused, the dhrink was dyin' out in me, an' I felt as tho' a she-cat had littered in my mouth," is one of many phrases that should not appear in the collected edition of his works. Yet a young writer of Mr. Kipling's capacity is more hopeful when he errs on the side of extravagant realism than when he is content to be inartistically conventional. He has not as yet drawn a lady with much success. On the whole, all we can say as yet—but it is a great deal—is that few, if any, novelists who have become great did such promising work at his age.

A HOLIDAY IN BED.

Now is the time for a real holiday. Take it in bed, if you are wise.

People have tried a holiday in bed before now, and found it a failure, but that was because they were ignorant of the rules. They went to bed with the open intention of staying there, say, three days, and found to their surprise that each morning they wanted to get up. This was a novel experience to them, they flung about restlessly, and probably shortened their holiday. The proper thing is to take your holiday in bed with a vague intention of getting up in another quarter of an hour. The real pleasure of lying in bed after you are awake is largely due to the feeling that you ought to get up. To take another quarter of an hour then becomes a luxury. You are, in short, in the position of the man who dined on larks. Had he seen the hundreds that were ready for him, all set out on one monster dish, they would have turned his stomach; but getting them two at a time, he went on eating till all the larks were exhausted. His feeling of uncertainty as to whether these might not be his last two larks is your feeling that, perhaps, you will have to

get up in a quarter of an hour. Deceive yourself in this way, and your holiday in bed will pass only too quickly.

Sympathy is what all the world is craving for, and sympathy is what the ordinary holiday-maker never gets. How can we be expected to sympathize with you when we know you are off to Perthshire to fish? No; we say we wish we were you, and forget that your holiday is sure to be a hollow mockery; that your child will jam her finger in the railway carriage, and scream to the end of the journey; that you will lose your luggage; that the guard will notice your dog beneath the seat, and insist on its being paid for; that you will be caught in a Scotch mist on the top of a mountain, and be put on gruel for a fortnight; that your wife will fret herself into a fever about the way the servant, who has been left at home, is carrying on with her cousins, the milkman, and the policeman; and that you will be had up for trespassing. Yet, when you tell us you are off to-morrow, we have never the sympathy to say, "Poor fellow, I hope you'll pull through somehow." If it is an exhibition you go to gape at, we never picture you dragging your weary legs from one department to another, and wondering why your back is so sore. Should it be the seaside, we talk heartlessly to you about the "briny," though we must know, if we would stop to think, that if there is one holiday more miserable than all the others, it

is that spent at the seaside, when you wander along the weary beach and fling pebbles at the sea, and wonder how long it will be till dinner-time. Were we to come down to see you, we would probably find you, not on the beach, but moving slowly through the village, looking in at the one milliner's window, or laboriously reading what the one grocer's labels say on the subject of pale ale, compressed beef, or vinegar. There was never an object that called aloud for sympathy more than you do, but you get not a jot of it. You should take the first train home and go to bed for three days.

To enjoy your holiday in bed to the full, you should let it be vaguely understood that there is something amiss with you. Don't go into details, for they are not necessary; and, besides, you want to be dreamy more or less, and the dreamy state is not consistent with a definite ailment. The moment one takes to bed he gets sympathy. He may be suffering from a tearing headache or a tooth that makes him cry out; but if he goes about his business, or even flops in a chair, true sympathy is denied him. Let him take to bed with one of those illnesses of which he can say with accuracy that he is not quite certain what is the matter with him, and his wife, for instance, will want to bathe his brow. She must not be made too anxious. That would not only be cruel to her, but it would wake you from the dreamy state. She must simply see that you are

"not yourself." Women have an idea that unless men are "not themselves" they will not take to bed, and as a consequence your wife is tenderly thoughtful of you. Every little while she will ask you if you are feeling any better now, and you can reply, with the old regard for truth, that you are "much about it." You may even (for your own pleasure) talk of getting up now, when she will earnestly urge you to stay in bed until you feel easier. You consent; indeed, you are ready to do anything to please her.

The ideal holiday in bed does not require the presence of a ministering angel in the room all day. You frequently prefer to be alone, and point out to your wife that you cannot have her trifling with her health for your sake, and so she must go out for a walk. She is reluctant, but finally goes, protesting that you are the most unselfish of men, and only too good for her. This leaves a pleasant aroma behind it, for even when lying in bed, we like to feel that we are uncommonly fine fellows. After she has gone you get up cautiously, and, walking stealthily to the wardrobe, produce from the pocket of your greatcoat a good novel. A holiday in bed must be arranged for beforehand. With a gleam in your eye you slip back to bed, double your pillow to make it higher, and begin to read. You have only got to the fourth page, when you make a horrible discovery—namely, that the book is not cut. An experi-

enced holiday-maker would have had it cut the night before, but this is your first real holiday, or perhaps you have been thoughtless. In any case you have now matter to think of. You are torn in two different ways. There is your coat on the floor with a knife in it, but you cannot reach the coat without getting up again. Ought you to get the knife or to give up reading? Perhaps it takes a quarter of an hour to decide this question, and you decide it by discovering a third course. Being a sort of an invalid, you have certain privileges which would be denied you if you were merely sitting in a chair in the agonies of neuralgia. One of the glorious privileges of a holiday in bed is that you are entitled to cut books with your fingers. So you cut the novel in this way, and read on.

Those who have never tried it may fancy that there is a lack of incident in a holiday in bed. There could not be a more monstrous mistake. You are in the middle of a chapter, when suddenly you hear a step upon the stair. Your loving ears tell you that your wife has returned, and is hastening to you. Now, what happens? The book disappears beneath the pillow, and when she enters the room softly you are lying there with your eyes shut. This is not merely incident; it is drama.

What happens next depends on circumstances. She says, in a low voice:

"Are you feeling any easier now, John?"

No answer.

"Oh, I believe he is sleeping."

Then she steals from the room, and you begin to read again.

During a holiday in bed one never thinks, of course, of analyzing his actions. If you had done so in this instance, you would have seen that you pretended sleep because you had got to an exciting passage. You love your wife, but, wife or no wife, you must see how the passage ends.

Possibly the little scene plays differently, as thus:

"John, are you feeling any easier now?"

No answer.

"Are you asleep?"

No answer.

"What a pity! I don't want to waken him, and yet the fowl will be spoilt."

"Is that you back, Marion?"

"Yes, dear; I thought you were asleep."

"No, only thinking."

"You think too much, dear. I have cooked a chicken for you."

"I have no appetite."

"I'm so sorry, but I can give it to the children."

"Oh, as it's cooked, you may as well bring it up."

In that case the reason of your change of action is obvious. But why do you not let your wife know that you have been reading? This is another matter

that you never reason about. Perhaps it is because of your craving for sympathy, and you fear that if you were seen enjoying a novel the sympathy would go. Or perhaps it is that a holiday in bed is never perfect without a secret. Monotony must be guarded against, and so long as you keep the book to yourself your holiday in bed is a healthy excitement. A stolen book (as we may call it) is like stolen fruit, sweeter than what you can devour openly. The boy enjoys his stolen apple because at any moment he may have to slip it down the leg of his trousers and pretend that he has merely climbed the tree to enjoy the scenery. You enjoy your book doubly because you feel that it is a forbidden pleasure. Or do you conceal the book from your wife lest she should think that you are over-exerting yourself? She must not to be made anxious on your account. Ah, that is it.

People who pretend (for it must be pretence) that they enjoy their holiday in the country, explain that the hills or the sea gave them such an appetite. I could never myself feel the delight of being able to manage an extra herring for breakfast, but it should be pointed out that neither mountains nor oceans give you such an appetite as a holiday in bed. What makes people eat more anywhere is that they have nothing else to do, and in bed you have lots of time for meals. As for the quality of the food supplied, there is no comparison. In the

Highlands it is ham and eggs all day till you sicken. At the seaside it is fish till the bones stick in your mouth. But in bed—oh, there you get something worth eating. You don't take three big meals a day, but twelve little ones, and each time it is something different from the last. There are delicacies for breakfast, for your four luncheons and your five dinners. You explain to your wife that you have lost your appetite, and she believes you, but at the same time she has the sense to hurry on your dinner. At the clatter of dishes (for which you have been lying listening) you raise your poor head, and say faintly:

"Really, Marion, I can't touch food."

"But this is nothing," she says, "only the wing of a partridge."

You take a side glance at it, and see that there is also the other wing and the body and two legs. Your alarm thus dispelled, you say:

"I really can't."

"But, dear, it is so beautifully cooked."

"Yes, but I have no appetite."

"But try to take it, John, for my sake."

Then for her sake you say she can leave it on the chair, and perhaps you will just taste it. As soon as she has gone you devour that partridge, and when she comes back she has the sense to say:

"Why you have scarcely eaten anything. What could you take for supper?"

You say you can take nothing, but if she likes she can cook a large sole, only you won't be able to touch it.

"Poor dear!" she says, "your appetite has completely gone," and then she rushes to the kitchen to cook the sole with her own hands. In half an hour she steals into your room with it, and then you (who have been wondering why she is such a time) start up protesting:

"I hope, Marion, this is nothing for me."

"Only the least bit of a sole, dear."

"But I told you I could eat nothing."

"Well, this is nothing, it is so small."

You look again, and see with relief that it is a large sole.

"I would much rather that you took it away."

"But, dear——"

"I tell you I have no appetite."

"Of course I know that; but how can you hope to preserve your strength if you eat so little? You have had nothing all day."

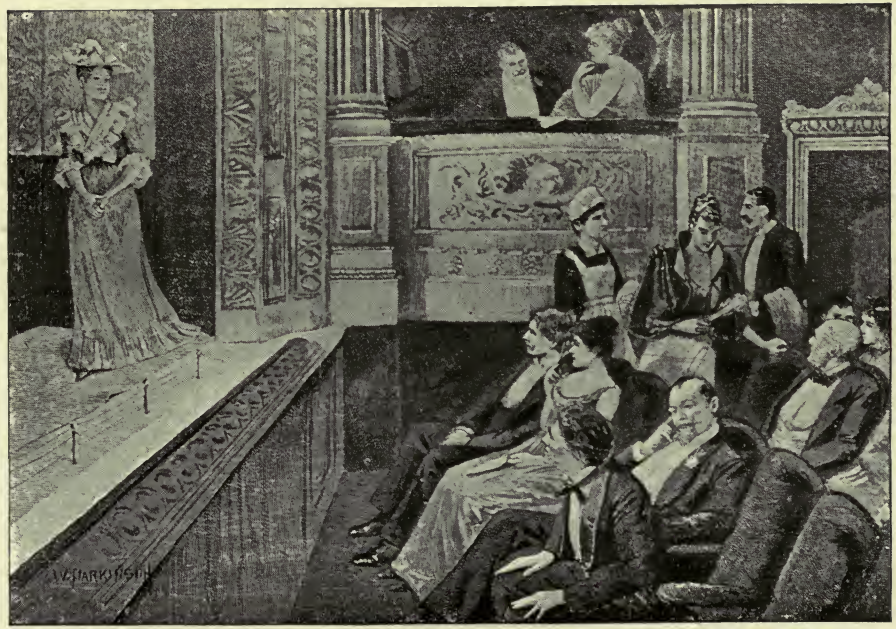
You glance at her face to see if she is in earnest, for you can remember three breakfasts, four luncheons, two dinners, and sandwiches between; but evidently she is not jesting. Then you yield.

"Oh, well, to keep my health up I may just put a fork into it."

"Do, dear; it will do you good, though you have no caring for it."

Take a holiday in bed, if only to discover what an angel your wife is.

There is one thing to guard against. Never call it a holiday. Continue not to feel sure what is wrong with you, and to talk vaguely of getting up presently. Your wife will suggest calling in the doctor, but pooh-pooh him. Be firm on that point. The chances are that he won't understand your case.



He sat up excitedly, rubbed his hands nervously on his trousers, and peered, not at the stage, but at the wings.

IS IT A MAN?

I.

I CAME upon his grave accidentally a few weeks ago while taking a short cut through the cemetery of an unlovely provincial town. His name I had forgotten the night I heard it years ago: had flung it away, so to speak, with the handbills he gave me at the same time, but the wording on the tombstone recalled his story to me as vividly as if it was a long lost friend whom I had suddenly struck against. I laughed at the story when he told it to me, but when I read it in brief on the tombstone I wondered why I had laughed.

We only met once, and it was in London at the theatre. His stall adjoined mine. When his lips were at rest he was a melancholy looking little man, but frequently he spoke to himself, and then all character went out of his face. For a time he paid no attention to the acting, but by and by he sat up excitedly in his seat, rubbed his hands nervously on his trousers, and leaning in my direction, peered, not at the stage, but at the wings. I heard him mutter, "Her cue in a moment, and I don't see

her!" He looked around the house as if to signal to everybody that something was about to happen, and then I noticed his feet begin to beat the floor instinctively, and his one palm run to the other. Next moment the heavy father whispered to the old, and therefore comic spinster, "But not a word of this to my daughter, here she comes."

The heroine of the piece sailed on to the stage, with tears for her father and smiles for the audience, and, as I thought, one quick glance for my neighbor. His feet pattered softly on the floor, as a sign to the audience to cheer, but they were reluctant, and after she had given them an imploring glance, she began to speak slowly, as one saying to herself between her spoken words, "I am still quite willing to stop if you will applaud me." And she was applauded, for my neighbor's feet at last set others a-going, and then she courtesied and waited for more, and then we all became energetic. The little man had been breathing quick in his excitement, but now he heaved a great sigh of relief, and whispered to me, in exultation, "What a reception the O'Reilly has got, sir, and quite spontaneous. The same thing occurs every night, every night, every night! Hush! you will see acting now."

He had silenced me when I was about to ask him if he was here every night. I judged him an ardent admirer of Miss O'Reilly, and had further evidence during the first act that one man may lead the

applause as a conductor leads the orchestra. When Miss Helmsley entered, and some pittites began to cheer, my neighbor cried "Sh-sh" so fiercely that the demonstration stopped abruptly, and Miss Helmsley withdrew her courtesy. When the heavy father stopped in the middle of his long speech for a "hand" to help him on his way, he would have got it but for the "Sh-sh" of the little man. When the comedian nudged the elderly spinster in the ribs, which is how elderly spinsters are made love to on the stage, some ladies giggled, but my neighbor looked at them with a face that said, "There is nothing funny in that," and they restrained their mirth. But when Miss O'Reilly snatched the smoking cap from Leonard and put it on her own flaxen head, he chuckled till the whole audience admitted the fun of it, and when Miss O'Reilly told Lord John to stand back and let her pass, my neighbor brought down the house; and when she made her reluctant exit he brought down the house again; and when the curtain fell on the first act he shouted "O'Reilly" until we were all infected. Not until he had her before the curtain would he retire, and then it was to speak about her to me. The exchange of a vesta introduced us to each other.

"You have seen the piece before?" I asked, with the good-nature that is born of a cigarette. I had already sufficient interest in him to wonder who he was.

"The piece?" he echoed, indifferently. "Oh, yes; I have seen the greater part of it frequently."

"How does it end?"

He shrugged his shoulders.

"I don't know," he answered, contemptuously, "I always walk out of the house just before the last tableau."

"Is Miss O'Reilly not on the stage in that tableau?" I asked.

"She is not," he replied, rapping out an oath or two, and trembling with rage. "Did you ever hear of anything so monstrous? She is leading lady, the idol of the town, and yet she is not on at the end. Excuse me, sir. I am always taken in this way when I think of it."

He bit his cigarette in two and asked for another vesta. Then he explained.

"She dies, you know, in the middle of the act."

"Ah, that accounts for it," I said.

"Not at all," he retorted, "she ought not to die until the tableau. And if she had to die then, that should have been the tableau. What do people come to the theatre to see?"

"The play," I suggested.

"Pooh, the play!" he sneered. "There are twenty plays to be seen nightly at West End theatres, but only one O'Reilly. They come to see the O'Reilly, sir, and it is defrauding the public to let her die a moment before the end."

"Still," I said, "the author——"

"Pshaw!" he broke in, "who thinks of the author? He could have easily have brought down the curtain on the O'Reilly's death, and I am confident he meant to do it. But Helmsley is the management's niece, and insisted on being the only lady in the tableau. You noticed that Helmsley was a complete frost? I distinctly heard someone hissing her."

"So did I," I said, smiling, for the someone had been himself.

"You heard it, too," he cried, audaciously. "Thank you sir," he said, and shook me warmly by the hand.

"The O'Reilly herself," he added, "had no wish to be in the tableau, but she knew the public would expect it. She is a woman, that, sir!"

"She is," I agreed.

"Ha!" he exclaimed. "You, too, were struck by it? But she impresses everyone in the same way. The management pay her a princely salary, but she is worth it. Did you hear how that man in the pit laughed over her lines about bread and cheese and kisses? I wonder who he is?"

"What salary does she get?" I asked, with the curiosity of a theatre-goer.

"They say," he replied, looking at me sharply, "that she gets eighty pounds a week."

"Hem!" I said.

He coughed. "What a carriage she has!" he exclaimed; and then waited for me to agree.

"Wonderful!" I said, for I never contradict a man who is in love.

"You think she has a wonderful carriage?" he asked, as if I had put the idea into his head. "Yes, you are quite right. I will tell her you remarked on it."

"You know her personally?"

"I have that honor," he replied, with dignity. "Candidly now, is not her elocution superb?"

"It is," I said.

"I agree with you," he answered, "and you have used the one word that properly describes it. Superb! Yes, that is the very word. I will tell her you said superb. I see you know acting, sir, when you see it. Not that I would call it acting. Would you call it acting?"

"Certainly not," I answered recklessly, but hoping he would not ask me to give it a name.

"No," he said, "it is not acting. It is simply genius."

"Genius," I said from memory, "is all the talents in a nutshell."

"Ha!" he cried, "that is how you would describe her? All the talents in a nutshell! What a capital line for the advertisements. All the talents in a nutshell! I will tell her you said that about her."

He lowered his voice. "Press?" he asked with some awe. I shook my head.

"Got friends on the press?" he next inquired.

"Yes," I said, remembering that a pressman owed me five pounds.

"Critics?"

"I shouldn't wonder."

"Then," he said, eagerly, "put them up to that line, 'all the talents in a nutshell,' or stop, would you mind giving me their private address?"

"Unfortunately, I cannot."

"That is a pity, because if you could see your way to a 'par,' I think I might be able to introduce you to the O'Reilly. But she is very particular."

"You are an enthusiast about her," I remarked.

"Who could help it?" he answered. "I have watched her career since she was—on my soul, sir, since she was nobody in particular. There was a time when that woman was no more famous than you are. You were speaking of her genius a minute ago, but, would you believe it, she rose from the ranks, positively from the ranks."

If I had swooned at this, his hands would have been ready to catch me; but I kept my senses.

"Your interest in her," I ventured to say, "was very natural, but it must have taken up a good deal of your time."

"All my time," he said.

"Except during business hours, of course."

"From the time I rise until midnight."

"Then you have no profession?"

"That is my profession."

"What?"

"The interest I take in her."

"And did you never do anything else?" I asked, beginning to envy the little man his father.

At once the melancholy look, of which I have spoken, came back to his face.

"I used to be in the profession myself," he said, sighing, "I am Jolly Little Jim."

He did not look it at that moment.

"You have forgotten me, I see," he said, dolefully. "Think a moment. Jolly Little Jim was the name."

"I am afraid I never heard it," I had to admit.

"Nonsense," he answered, testily. "Everybody knew that name once. I got no other, though my real name is James Thorpe. Why, I advertised as Jolly Little Jim. You *must* have heard it."

"Perhaps I have," I replied, pitying his distress.

"If you would care to read my press notices," he began putting his hand into his pocket, "I can——"

"Not to night," I interposed, hurriedly.

"I can repeat most of them," he said, brightly.

"Rather tell me why you gave up a profession," I said, "which you doubtless adorned."

"Thank you," he answered, again pressing my hand. "Well, sir, the O'Reilly has the responsibility for that."

"You gave up acting because it interfered with your interest in her?"

"You may put it in that way. I gave up every-

"I used to be in the profession myself," he said, sighing, "I am Jolly Little Jim."

thing for her. If that woman, sir, had asked me to choose between her and my press notices, I believe I would have burned them."

"How has she rewarded you?" I asked, seeing that he was of a communicative nature.

"She married me," he answered, drawing himself up to his full height. "Yes, I am her husband!"

It was I who shook his hand this time. I could think of nothing else to do. He was beginning his story, when the bell tinkled, warning us to return to our seats.

"She is on immediately," he said, "so we must go back and give her a hand. I'll meet you here again after the second act."

II.

During the second act Mr. Thorpe behaved as previously, drinking in Miss O'Reilly's every word, cheering her comings and goings, and yawning, and even reading a newspaper, when he should have been listening to Miss Helmsley. Once I saw him make a note on his programme, and felt sure it was "All the talents in a nut-shell." I started him on his story as soon as he joined me in the smoking-room. (He had remained in his seat to shout "O'Reilly.")

"The first time I ever set eyes on her," he began, "was at Dublin, where we had both been engaged

for pantomime. Yes, that woman once played in pantomime; and, what is more, she was only second girl. That is a strange thing to think of. I was the first villain, Deepdyeo, and the *Shamrock* said of my creation, 'Another part admirably rendered is the Deepdyeo of Mr. James Thorpe, better known to fame as Jolly Little Jim. Mr. Thorpe, who was received with an ovation——'"

"But you were to tell me of Miss O'Reilly," I reminded him.

"Ah," he said, "I shall never forget that first meeting. It took place at rehearsal, and when I left the theatre that afternoon I was a changed man."

"You fell in love with her at first sight?"

"Not absolutely at first sight. You see I was introduced to her before the rehearsal began, and there was no opportunity of falling in love with her then."

"Still, she had impressed you?"

"How could she impress me before I had seen her do anything? What is it in a woman that one falls in love with?"

"Who can tell?" I said.

"Anybody can tell," he answered, putting me down for a bachelor. "It is the genius in her, or rather what we consider genius, for many men make a mistake about that."

"So you loved her for her genius?"

"What first struck me was her exit. I suppose I

may say that I fell in love with it at once. Then she sang; only a verse, but it was enough. Later she danced, and that, sir, was a revelation. I knew the woman was a genius. By the time the pantomime was in full swing, she was the one woman in the world for me."

"And she had fallen in love with your genius, too?"

"I could not be certain. You see we were not on speaking terms; she was so jealous."

"But that," I said, "is recognized as a sign of love. No doubt she wanted you entirely to herself. Who was the lady?"

"What lady?" he asked, in surprise.

"The lady Miss O'Reilly was jealous of," I said.

"I never said she was jealous of a lady; though, of course, she would be jealous of the principal girl. I spoke of myself."

"But how," I questioned, "could she be jealous unless she thought you were paying attention to some other woman."

"Oh!" he said, with slow enlightenment, "I see what you mean, but you don't see what I mean. It was of me that she was jealous, or rather of my song. You may not be aware that in pantomime we are allowed to choose our own songs. Well, it so happened that she and I both wanted to sing the same song. It was an exquisite thing, called, 'Do you think when you wink?' and as I had applied for

permission to sing it first she was told to select something else. That was why we did not speak."

"But if you loved her," I said, speaking, it is true, on a subject of which I knew little, "you would surely have consented to waive your rights to the song. Love, it is said, delights in self-sacrifice."

"No doubt," he admitted, "but you know the lines, 'I could not love you, dear, so much, loved I not honor more.' Well, my honor was at stake, for I had promised my admirers in Dublin—and they were legion (see the *Shamrock* for January 12, 1883) —to sing that song. And my fame was at stake as well as my honor, for I created quite a furore with 'Do you think when you wink?'"

"Still," I insisted, "love is all powerful."

"I admit it," he answered, "and, what is more, I proved it, for after I had sung the song a week, I transferred it to her."

"Did she sing it as well as you had done?"

There was a mighty struggle within him before he could reply, but when he did speak he was magnificent.

"She sang it far better than I," he said, firmly, and then winced.

"It was a great sacrifice you made," I said, gently, "but doubtless it had its reward. Did she give you her hand in exchange for the song?"

"No," he answered, "we were not married until a year after that. She was grateful to me, but soon

we quarrelled again. The fact is that I took a 'call' which she insisted was meant for her. She felt that disappointment terribly; indeed she has not got over it yet. She cannot speak about it without crying."

"You mean," I said, "that you years ago deprived her of the privilege of courtesying to an audience? Surely she would not let that prey on her mind?"

"You don't understand," he replied, "that fame is food and drink to an artist. It was months before she forgave me that, though she is naturally the most tender-hearted creature. Our baggage man stole fifty pounds from her, and she would not prosecute him because she knew his sister. But you see it was not money that I deprived her of, it was fame."

"And did you win your way back into her favor," I asked, "by letting her take a 'call' that was meant for you?"

"No," he said; "several times I determined to do so, but when the moment came I could not make the sacrifice. I spent about half my salary in presents to her, but, although she took them, she refused to listen to any proposal of marriage. By this time I had confessed my love for her. Well, we parted, and soon afterward I got an engagement as chief comedian in the 'Powder Monkey' Company, which was then on tour. She was playing chambermaid in it. Fancy that woman flinging herself away on

chambermaids! I made a big hit in my part. The *Lincoln Observer* said, 'Mr. James Thorpe, the celebrated Jolly Little Jim, created a——'"

"But about Miss O'Reilly," I asked.

"We got on swimmingly at first," he said.

"She had decided to forgive you?"

"No, she was stiff the first day, but I put her up to a bit of business, that used to be encored nightly, and then she accepted my offer of marriage. But a week after I had given her the engagement ring she returned it to me. I don't blame her."

"You admit that she had just cause of complaint against you?"

"Yes, no woman who was an artist could have stood it. The fact is, that one night I took the 'up' side of her in our comic love scene. That is to say, I had my face to the audience, and so she was forced to turn her back to them. I had no right to do it, but a sort of madness came over me, and I yielded to the impulse. As soon as we had made our exits she flung the ring in my—ah, she gave me back the ring, and, for the remainder of the tour she was not civil to me. The tour ended abruptly; indeed, the manager decamped, owing us all a fortnight's salary, and we were stranded in Bootle without money to pay for our lodgings, not to speak of our tickets back to London. I pawned my watch and sold my fur coat, and shared what I got for them with her."

"And so the engagement was resumed?"

"No, no; that was merely a friendly act, and it was accepted as such. The engagement was not resumed until I got a 'par' about her into a Sunday paper. But that is the bell again. I'll tell you the rest after her death-scene."

III.

Miss O'Reilly died as slowly as the management would allow her, and, when she had gasped her last gasp with her hair down, Jolly Little Jim, that was, led the tears and the cheers, cried out, "Superb, by Jove! that woman has all the talents in a nutshell," and strutted from the stalls in a manner that invited the rest of the audience to follow. But everybody, save Mr. Thorpe and myself, remained to see the comic man produce the missing will, and so my little friend and I got the smoking-room to ourselves.

"The next time we were on tour together," he continued, after I had given the death-scene a testimonial, "was in 'Letters of Fire,' with a real steam engine. I was *Bill Rody*, the returned convict, and the *Rochester Age* said, 'Mr. Thorpe, who, as Jolly Little Jim, made such a——'"

"The engagement was resumed by this time?" I asked.

"I told you the 'par' had done that. However, we had another tiff during rehearsals, because I got

the epilogue to speak. I daresay that would have led to a rupture had not——"

"Had not she loved you so deeply," I suggested.

"She loved me fondly," he replied, "but she loved fame more. Every true genius does. No, the reason she did not break with me then was that I was 'on' in her great scene in the fourth act. You see, as chief comedian I had a right to a little comic by-play in that scene, and if I had exercised that right I should have drawn away attention from herself. Thus I had the whip hand of her. I am inclined to think that had I pressed the point I could have married her during the run of that piece."

"By threatening, if she delayed the wedding, to introduce comic business into her great scene?"

"Yes, but I did not, and you are no doubt wondering why. The fact is, I thought my self-denial would soften her heart and so bring about the results I was pining for. Perhaps it would have done so, but, unfortunately, 'Letters of Fire' did not draw (though a great success artistically), and we had to put 'London Slums' on in its place. In that piece the leading juvenile played up to her so well that she began to neglect me. I was in despair, and so not quite accountable for my actions. Nevertheless, you will think the revenge I took as cold-blooded as it seemed to her. You must understand that, though our pieces were splendidly billed, the O'Reilly had fifty chromos of herself, done at her own expense,

and all framed. These she got our agent in advance to exhibit in the best places in the best shops, and undoubtedly they added to her fame. They preceded us by a week, and so she was always well-known before we opened anywhere. Well, sir, I got fifty chromos of myself framed, and ten days before we were due at Sheffield I had them put into fifty barbers' shops there.

"Why barbers' shops?" I interposed.

"Because they are most seen and discussed there," he explained. "It comes natural to a man when he is being shaved to talk about what is on at the theatres. I can't say why that is so, but so it is. Perhaps one reason is that barbers are nearly always enthusiasts on matters of art. Well, if there is a good chromo in the shop, of course it comes in for its share of discussion, and the barber tells what parts you have played before, and so on. It is a great help. However, the O'Reilly no sooner heard what I had done than she told me all was over between us."

"Still," I said, "the barbers would have had room for her pictures as well as for yours."

"I got the best places," he answered, "and there is this, too, to consider. The more chromos there are to look at, the less attention does any particular one get; and she held that if I loved her truly I would not have stepped in, as it were, between her and the public. She did not get a reception that

opening night at Sheffield, and, of course, she gave me the blame. It seriously affected her health."

"But you made that quarrel up?"

"Not for three weeks. Then she gave in. Instead of my going to her, she came to me and offered to renew the engagement if I would withdraw my chromos."

"Which you did gladly, of course?"

"I took a night to think of it. You who are not an artist cannot conceive how I loved my chromos. Did I tell you that I had printed beneath them 'Yours very sincerely, Jolly Little Jim?' However, I did yield to her wishes, and we were to be married at Newcastle, when a terrible thing happened. We have now come to the turning-point of my life. At Newcastle, sir, I made my last appearance on the stage."

Mr. Thorpe turned his face from me until he recovered command of it. Then he resumed.

"Two days before the marriage was to take place a Newcastle paper slated her and praised me. It said, 'Miss O'Reilly ought to take a page out of Mr. Thorpe's book. She should learn from him that the action should suit the word, not precede it. She should note his facial expression, which is comedy in picture, and control her own tendency to let her face look after itself. She should take note of his clear pronunciation and model her somewhat snappy delivery on it.' Sir, I read that notice with mixed

feelings. As an artist I could not but delight in its complimentary references to myself, but as a lover I dreaded its effect on the O'Reilly. After breakfast I went to call on her at her lodgings, and happening to pass a number of news-shops on the way I could not resist the temptation to buy at each a paper with the notice. I concealed the papers about my person, and as I approached her door I tried to look downcast. But I fear my step was springy. Perhaps she saw me from her window. At all events her landlady informed me that Miss O'Reilly declined to see me. 'Here is something I was told to give you,' said the woman, handing me a pill-box. It contained the ring! I compelled the O'Reilly to listen to me that night at the theatre, and she allowed that I was not to blame for the notice. But she pointed out that there could be no chance of happiness for a husband and wife whose interests were opposed, and I saw that it was true. I walked about the streets of Newcastle all that night, such was my misery, such the struggle in my breast between love and fame. Well, sir, love conquered, as it never could have conquered her, for she was a great artist, and I only a small one, though the *Basingstoke Magpie* said of me, 'The irresistibly droll Mr. Thorpe, better known as——'"

"The play will end in a minute," I said; "how did you win her?"

"I offered," he replied, with emotion, "to give up

my profession and devote myself to furthering her fame."

"And to live on her?" I said, aghast.

"You who do not understand art may put it in that way," he replied, "but she realized the sacrifice I was making for her sake and doubted my love no longer. Was it nothing, sir, to give up my fame, to give up the name I was known by all over England (as the *Torquay Chat* said), and sink to the level of those who have never been mentioned in the papers? Why, you yourself had forgotten the famous Jolly Little Jim."

His voice was inexpressibly mournful, and I felt that I really had been listening to a love romance. The last three hours, too, had shown me that Mr. Thorpe was responsible for some of the fame of his wife.

"The management," he went on, bravely, "allowed me to retire without the usual fortnight's notice, and so the marriage took place on the day we had previously arranged for it."

"Had you a pleasant honeymoon?" I asked.

"In one sense," he replied, "we had no honeymoon, for she played that night as usual; but in another sense it has been a honeymoon ever since, for we have the same interests, the same joys, the same sorrows."

"That is to say, you have both only her fame to think of now? May I ask, did she, for whom

you made such a sacrifice, make any sacrifice for you?"

"She did, indeed," he answered. "For four weeks she let her name be printed in the bills thus: 'Miss O'Reilly (Mrs. James Thorpe),' though to have it known by the public that she is married is against an actress."

"And you are happy in your new occupation?"

"Very happy," he answered, cheerfully, "and very proud." Then with a heavy sigh he added, "But I wish people would remember Jolly Little Jim."

There was really something pathetic about the man; but before I could tell a lie and say that I now remembered Jolly Little Jim perfectly, the audience began to applaud, and Mr. Thorpe, thrusting some bills into my hands, hurried back to the stalls to shout "O'Reilly."

As I have said, I never met him again, nor thought of him, until I found myself at his grave. This is the inscription on the tombstone:

ERECTED TO THE MEMORY OF

JAMES THORPE,

AGED 38,

BY HIS SORROWING WIFE,

THE FAMOUS MAY O'REILLY

(Of the principal theatres).

Poor Mr. Thorpe! There was something lovable about him. The O'Reilly might have put on the tombstone: "Better known as Jolly Little Jim." It would have gratified him.

A WOODLAND PATH.

THE rose-bush that taps on my window at night, as if entreating me to let it in out of the cold, hangs motionless to-day, a drop of water on the tips of many of its leaves. The paling a few yards away is a dank green, on which I could draw pictures with a stick. On the dyke six sparrows—no, seven, for another has arrived—sit in a row, at their wits' end what to do next. A black hen seems to have lost something in the garden. Fifty yards ahead the fields fade into mist.

But it is not raining, so let us go into the wood. The high road is sloppy and has lost its grip. To jump from side to side of it in search of hard places is only to send the wood farther away. We must plod on doggedly, seeing to it that we do not leave our boots in the mud.

Here is the wood, with only a ditch and a dyke between it and you. The path begins, like so many of its kind, with a gap in the dyke that the farmer fills now and again with whins. Some say that walking in a wood stifles them, but even in summer I prefer it to fields and commons, and in winter it draws me out-of-doors, despite the muddy highway.

When the rest of the world hereabouts is carpeted with mud, the path through the wood is hard and springy, in most parts green, with here and there a little morass that I can walk around. If we plunged into that deceptive grass we would squirt up water into our faces. Here is a lump of snow that has forgotten to go with the thaw, and we even come to a pool with ice on it. Over the ice is a film of water. Push your stick into the pool, and the ice breaks without a sound. The crispness has gone from it, and if we take it in our hands pieces fall off and are water almost as soon as they touch the grass.

The path does not make the most of the wood by twisting through it. It grew under the feet of persons anxious to reach their destination; as I understand, they used to walk briskly along the path with milk-cans in their hands. The ploughmen delve through it heavily still, and in summer boys are to be seen. They are not, however, to be met with. We hear in the distance the cry of one boy to another, and think as little of it as though we were listening to the mavis, for boys and girls are equally at home in woods, and I would drive neither from them. But, like the mavis, the boy promptly hops out of sight, regarding us as intruders, and watching us furtively from behind trees. The birds, I believe, have the same opinion of us, but look on boys as larger birds than themselves, not to be trusted, but

with a right to be there. In summer I creep upon the boys, and sink into the heather where I can observe them unseen. They have sharp ears, and if I tread on a brittle twig I am discovered. One gives a shrill cry, another whistles, and a third drops from his tree like an apple. They pick up their ragged jackets, and in a moment I am alone in the wood. They seem to sink into the ground, and I, the enemy, am left behind. But at times I succeed in approaching within earshot; then I see them at games in no way dissimilar to those of monkeys, and quite as mischievous. Or they are here on business, after a nest. One climbs on to the back of the other as the first step toward ascending the tree, then the support gives way, and the climber tumbles to the ground on his head. He sits there dazed for a moment, and then, without a word, the ascending begins again. This time the little villain is successful. He disappears among the branches, and by and by slides down the trunk with three or four eggs in his mouth. If he comes whack upon the ground the eggs break in his mouth, and he screams reproaches at his friend. But if all goes well, they search for a thorn with which to make holes in their spoil. They blow the eggs, put them in their caps, and saunter home unconscious of their torn sleeves. Care has found no resting-place in their buoyant hearts yet, and the holes and rents in their ragged garments are mended by hands, and

scanned tenderly by eyes, learned in love's ways, if careworn and tired.

But boys come seldom into the wood at this time of year, and I am looking for squirrels. That bundle of firewood resting against a tree is a likely place, so you may shove your stick into it. Squirrels may be anywhere, however, and all we are sure of is that they will come upon us suddenly. Not one is to be seen from here, but it is a capital place to stop a moment at if you would carry away in your mind a fair sample of the wood. The trees are nearly all pines and beeches, two kinds that grow side by side, though they have nothing in common. All summer the beeches in their gay dress laugh at the sombre pines. But with winter the beeches are stripped bare in a few nights, and then the pine can give them a piece of its mind. Some of us are beeches that forget the winter while we can be gay in summer, and others are pines, who think less of show than wear. But I would rather be a beech than a pine, and so know the extremes of delight and despair. The children of the beech have kept their leaves longer than their mother. They are mere twigs sprouting up among the grass, and the wind has not been able to get down to them. But their leaves are a brown-red, only warm when the sun shines on them, and to-day there is no sun. The grass is green, with tufts of hay among it; and if we leave the path we shall soon stumble over

heather roots. Those dark green spots in the distance are broom, but they are too dark in color to show well in winter in a pine-wood.

No, don't stone him; stand quietly, and watch. We have, it will be seen, come upon a squirrel. The mildest of men looks for a stone when he sees a squirrel laughing at him or a bottle bobbing up and down in the water. But, of course, if you did strike the squirrel—not that I believe you could do so—you would go home distressed, all pleasure in the walk lost. Besides, if you frighten the squirrel, he will simply climb out of sight; while if we only arouse his suspicions, he may take us for a walk. See, he has leaped to the beech; now he is on the fir; now where is he? There, two trees ahead. The squirrel, once he has set off in a straight line, will continue on it though nature be against him. He runs along the trees. Though I have seen the squirrel miss his jump, I never saw him fall to the ground. Ninety-nine times in a hundred he leaps correctly, dropping on the exact centre of the branch, and running along it without a pause. When he is out in his reckoning, he always succeeds in catching at some other branch. We walk at an ordinary pace beneath and keep up with him, for he never stops, except for a moment now and again to cock his head at us. If we are coming, he is willing to go on; but if not, he will rest. My reason for following him still is that I want to see how he will

act when he comes to the end of the wood. But he has often raced me to this point before, and I can guess what he will do. One would expect him to turn back, or to skurry off to the right or left; but no, he goes straight on, and when he reaches the last tree never hesitates a moment as to what he ought to do next. He slides down the trunk at the other side from you, darts across the road, and is up a tree again, asking if you have had enough of it. He has made us stray from the path at all events, and our boots are beginning to chirp. If we follow the squirrel farther we shall probably slip on the roots of trees to which the rain has given a polish. That was not rain you felt just now; it was only a drop from a leaf. But the rain will be on before we reach home.

WOMAN AND THE PRESS.

FORTUNATELY for the ladies who are now making or half making a livelihood by journalism, the rank and file of them are not to be measured by the notorieties. Many lady-journalists whose names are in no one's mouth are already proving that the press affords a calling in every way as honorable for them as for men. Until the other day the opinion was almost universal in this country that a lady could not earn her living modestly unless she followed some down-trodden profession such as that of the governess, in which she retained her modesty because she could not become brazen at the salary. With independence her womanliness would take flight. These chains of prejudice are breaking, and by the beginning of next century we shall doubtless find that the lady-journalist, by the example of her life, has done something to break them. Even those who sigh over the lady-politician, or put out their tongue (uninvited) to the lady-doctor, or shake their heads at the actress, will be able to condemn journalism as an unwomanly profession because of its publicity. The journalism best suited to ladies can be done at home and anonymously, which is one of its advantages.

As it happens, however—though this is only an accident of the moment—the most prominent lady journalists are doing their best to weaken these arguments by making themselves as noisy as street organs.

The New Journalism has discovered that some of the ladies whom it finds useful are prepared to "go a considerable length." Here is this Miss Nellie Something of America, for instance; one of a type that has sprung up since Martin Chuzzlewit was requested to gaze upon the celebrated characters of that country. Miss Nellie has been shot round the world by a New York paper, which holds—perhaps rightly—that because she has beaten Jules Verne's "record," an American lady has gone around the world in less than eighty days. Sensible people, however—those who can keep their heads when a hero goes over Niagara in a barrel, and see that the barrel only is worthy of admiration—will agree that if this is the kind of thing expected of lady journalists, journalism is scarcely a sphere for their sisters. Miss Nellie, of course, so far as we on this side know, is not a journalist at all. She has been behaving as a music-hall "artiste" and is only comparable to the lady who walks the tight-rope or excels at "high-kicking." Like these, her rivals, she is very plucky, and no more need be said of her. Scores of high-kickers and male-impersonators in this country are ready to start round the world to-

morrow "in costume" in the attempt to beat Miss Nellie's record, if our New Journalism will send them. But, fortunately, the New Journalism of this country has not as yet been a financial success.

Nevertheless, whatsoever is specially objectionable in the ways of the New Journalism ladies can be found to do. It is well known that they are the best interviewers, because they can go where men are not admitted and ask questions at which even the male interviewer would blush. The celebrity into whose study the lady interviewer pushes her way is in an awkward position. It is quite within his right to tell his servants to remove the male interviewer with their feet; but the lady is here, and the question is how to get her out. How did she get in? Probably by pretending to be somebody else, if indeed she has not tripped in behind some visitor. She may have been despatched to the work after the other sex has failed to gain an entrance, and she is determined to succeed. She may wait calmly for hours until she sees the door ajar. If her victim is a lawyer she will take the name of one of his clients; if a doctor she will call herself a patient; if a politician she pretends to be the wife of his agent. In short, there is no lie to which she will not resort, and her conscience is so dead that she boasts of her methods when they have succeeded. Now she has borne down on her victim, and he tells her politely that he must decline to be

interviewed. She then takes a chair and insists on interviewing him. His wisest course is not to answer any question; but it is a course not easy to pursue, for she is an adept at exasperating. Even if he is dumb to her she examines the room. She "takes in" the furniture, and her "host's" dress, and pounces on the papers that litter his writing-table. On her way out she may have the good fortune to see her victim's little boy, and him she at once cross-examines. The servants are also pressed. It is the lady interviewers who ask their victim whether it be true that he is applying for a divorce, and what his proof is, and which is the stool his wife flung at him. This would read like exaggeration were it not notorious that the New Journalism is ever on the scent of scandals, and that the ladies are its best servants.

Less discreditable to their calling are the lady-journalists who frequent "private views" and "first nights," in order to say at great length who were present and what they wore. This sort of thing is carried by some of them to impertinence; but they are at least comparatively harmless, and they look so happy while plying their vocation that it would be cruel to frown at them. They provide gossip for the society journals and such provincial papers as fill their London letter with personalities. The personalities are usually inaccurate, but, like quack pills, do no perceptible harm. Of some of the

ladies, too, it may be said that they write capital letters—usually in weekly journals—for their own sex.

But journalism offers an excellent profession for ladies who do not want either to gossip or interview or be reporters. All the leading papers nowadays are to some extent magazines, and devote space to short leaders or essays on social, literary, or artistic subjects. As it is, a number of these are written by ladies, and no doubt ladies will write more of them in future. Many men of some mark write little else, and find the work pleasant. It can be done anywhere, and the writer is his own master. Editors have not yet educated themselves up to the point of having women on their night-staff, and there is in newspaper offices a prejudice—if such it should be called—against "petticoats." But any editor not a ninny is as willing to print articles from the outside by women as by men, and judges these articles entirely by their merit. Women with some literary faculty have thus a lucrative profession upon which they can enter any day they choose with the certainty that they are not handicapped by their sex. There are thousands of subjects ready to their hands, and they can do the work when and where they like.

A PLEA FOR SMALLER BOOKS.

An author advises us to publish weekly a list of selected books, for which he proposes the title, "Books to Borrow." The British public, he thinks, is still wondering what Mr. Mark Pattison meant by saying that men, to respect themselves, must own at least a thousand volumes. Not only does the public shun the bookseller; like the Argyllshire dairymaid, who stipulates that she shall not dine on salmon oftener than four times a week, it has become fastidious, and will not now even borrow lightly. It must have its library fiction hot from the press, as if novels, like milk, turned sour with keeping; and it declines to gorge on memoirs that are not as fashionable as the last thing in bonnets. Mr. Macniven must not send "Pride and Prejudice" to his subscribers, the Misses Insatiable—they know it is not new by the cover. Messrs. Douglas & Foulis will not impose upon Mrs. Uptodate with the "Life of Macaulay," which is an achievement, when she can have Mr. Hatton's "Toole," which may be mostly drivel, but was only issued yesterday. Such, we must agree with our cynical novelist, are among the ways of the "reading public," which, how-

ever, seldom buys, borrows, or gets from the library so long as newspapers or magazines will condense the new tome into an article. Authors and publishers complain, but the public is not the only sinner. The bane of British literature at present is its bulk. The law of the land is as much that novels should be in three volumes as that there must be a public-house at every street-corner. "924 pages" is advertised as a recommendation. As for the biographies of Undistinguished Persons and the Reminiscences of Men I Have Known for Five Minutes, they seem to be manufactured for sale by weight. Like the epistles Gabrielissime Harvey sent to Tom Nash, they would break the wheels of a carrier's cart, and could be hurled forth at arm's-length for a wager. If the public is to keep up with current literature it must take all the short cuts. We need a poet to sing the praises of little books.

Our literature lies crushed beneath its load of "padding." Take the novelists—the four-in-hand popular novelists, most prolific of writers, if we except the book-makers who cook with other men's brains. The critic, with spade, buries rows of new novelists weekly. They may have merit, but he gazes at the piles of three-volumes until his one ambition is to make them corpses. Novelists who have refused to die in the bud he leaves to wither in flower. They are nearly all able, entertaining writers; but fiction is their means of livelihood, and

were they to cram all their best into one book they would soon be empty. They must not be too prodigal of either character or plot, and consequently their story would generally reach its natural end in a single volume. Having to run three times round the course, however, instead of once, they must not "spurt" at the start. Padding is of various merits and many kinds. We have a distinguished novelist who can become a landscape painter by sending anyone of his characters to the window. There is philosophical padding, which is usually the cheapest of all. When a lady-novelist thinks she is getting along too quickly she arranges for another ball, or sends Claude and Emmeline back to the conservatory. The smoking-room, with cigars and gossip, or what they think of the situation in the kitchen, is another reserve that may be drawn upon; and there are hardened novelists who do not hesitate to write "Retrospective" at the head of several chapters in volume two. Thus novels become paper bags blown out with wind. Often it is cleverly done, but at its best the sand can be detected in the sugar; and at its second-best, which is not the lowest degree of comparison, it is an attempt to stock a whole house with the drawing-room furniture. It spoils the style of the rare writer who has any. Probably the novels of the present year that do not suffer from length could be counted on the fingers of a one-armed man. Mr. Stevenson is a

brave exception to the rule; but the shilling novels, now so popular, being mostly refuse, need not be considered. It remains a fact that few novels published nowadays are not at least twice as long as "Silas Marner." One of the fine things to remember about George Eliot is that she was offered a tempting sum to lengthen one of her books, and declined it.

Curiously, while all see what is wrong, no one proposes a remedy. The public blames the author, the author the publisher, the publisher the public; but they are as helpless as the lady who complained of the heat, yet never thought of sitting further away from the fire. It is a commercial question. The authors, who are no doubt in most cases their own severe critics, say that the publishers look askance at one volume. The publishers say they must produce what pays. Yet the public is all the time pointing out that it cannot pay, and its shelves show that it does not. In short, the publisher's appeal is to the library, which prefers books to be in several volumes, thus tempting the public to become heavy subscribers. The publisher flourishes moderately without much risk under this arrangement, for the libraries take as many copies of an average book as will at least secure him against loss. He also bears in mind that a twenty-shilling book's cost of production may be little more than that of a six-shilling book. To appeal direct to the public with cheap

single volumes might mean a much greater sale, but it would be more risky. The gain to literature would be certain. Many books which now get a library circulation would never be printed, and the better books would drop the ballast that now keeps them trailing to earth, for padding would be at a discount. As it is, books of merit, when offered, years after their first publication, in one volume, have a considerable sale, which would doubtless have been much greater had they been published originally at the same price, and without their superfluous chapters. We ought to take a lesson from France. With so many books to choose between, we have not the appetite of the boy at a public dinner, who, when told by his father to eat for to-morrow and the next day, replied that he must first eat for yesterday and the day before. The public should be denied no opportunity of becoming its own critic. As it passes saner judgments, the standard of contemporary literature will rise.

BOYS' BOOKS: THEIR GLORIFICATION.

THOSE of us who were boys not so very long ago rather resent the knowledge that our favorite authors are now writing for another generation. We used to conceive them very old fellows, who would die off as we grew up; yet here is Ballantyne with another book for boys this winter, and as for Hope, I met him lately, hardly middle-aged yet. I used to think that Hope (or else Ballantyne or Marryat) ought to be made King of England, and after over a dozen years I found I remember his "My Schoolboy Friends" better than he did himself. He couldn't remember the two tutors, Paddy Williamson and Vials, and when I said there were two boys called Abbing and Lessing at Whiteminster, which is the school he writes about, he said, rather indifferently, "very likely." I would let no other man talk slightingly of that book, which is in some ways more delightful than "Tom Brown's Schooldays." When the boys at the school at which I looked in now and then should have been following Balbus building his eternal walls, or with Caius flying from the city, they were sitting on a

wall frequently, arguing the question whether Mr. Hope did right in killing off Harry Kennedy. I always thought that young-ladyish, and I am glad to know now that the author thinks so too. "My Schoolboy Friends" was one of his earliest efforts, and he feared breaking away altogether from tradition, so he introduced this little bit of sentiment. The success of Farrar's "Eric" and "St. Winifred's" made him take his one false step. To speak disrespectfully of "Eric" is to be bold; for are there not thousands of ladies, and girls who will be ladies shortly, that "love" the book? Hundreds of boys' books have been written for girls, and Farrar wrote the best of them. His boys are girls in knickerbockers. Mention them not in the same breath with "My Schoolboy Friends." If there are any boys to-day who have not read that book, let them see to it that it is put into their hands at Christmas. They need not be so particular about having the continuation of it, called "George's Enemies." Hope writes at his fireside with his paper on his knees, which must be almost as pleasant as the method of a distinguished lady-novelist who finds that she writes best in bed.

About fifteen years ago I heard that R. M. Ballantyne lived in Edinburgh. Then I wanted to see Edinburgh. Though a dozen years at least have passed since I read any of his books, I could sit down to-day and write out the story of nearly every

one of them that had been written up to that time. No books take such a hold upon one as the stories he reads in his boyhood, and the more reason, therefore, have we to be proud that there are such manly boys' books in the land. Ballantyne was always delightful. "Shifting Winds," with the stout gentleman under whom the boudoir chairs came to grief; "Gascoigne, the Sandal-Wood Trader," with its glorious race; "Ungava," with its never-to-be-forgotten end of Brave Dick Prince—how they all come back to one when he recalls his school days! Best of all (how solemnly we discussed which was best of all!) was "The Coral Island." Many writers of romances have had romantic notions, but you can't do better than wreck your hero on an island. To this day I could not pass a book by in which there was a desert island. The *Spectator* said that Mr. Stevenson's "Black Arrow" (his only poor book) stands as a tale for boys next to "Ivanhoe." I scorn this. What about "Robinson Crusoe?" Yes, and what about "The Coral Island," and Jules Verne's masterpiece, "The Mysterious Island?" Ballantyne's is the most fascinating idea. Three boys are wrecked on an island. One of them, I remember, is called Ralph, and another Peterkin. Who that has read the story will ever forget how they emptied their pockets to count their worldly possessions, or the cave which was reached by diving? "The Swiss Family Robinson," though I remember Fritz

and Ernest, does not compare with "The Coral Island," which is worth a thousand of "King Solomon's Mines." No boy could be expected to respect another boy who had not read Ballantyne's bewitching book.

Even "Ivanhoe" I could only put second to "Robinson Crusoe." It is to rob a boy of his birthright to keep him from either of them. Thinking it over now, there can be no doubt that Rebecca was very superior to Rowena, but in the old days when we really lived, that was not an important point. Ivanhoe licked the Templar, and Rowena was the girl he wanted, therefore Scott had to see to it that Ivanhoe got Rowena. We thought Bois-Gilbert a villain from beginning to end, though we admired the way he ran off with Rebecca in his arms, without noticing that she was heavy. Really we had not time to devote much attention to the girls. Who could think of them when Robin Hood was waiting round the corner? The Black Knight, too, what a superb creation he is! From the boy's point of view, "Ivanhoe" has only one blot! That is when Ivanhoe goes out to fight Bois-Gilbert over the affair of Rebecca, and the Templar is getting the best of it when he has a stroke. Ivanhoe was unwell at the time, but we resented the manner of his victory. Well or ill, it was a duty as a hero to go in and lick Bois-Gilbert in a fair, legitimate manner.

"Quentin Durward" is Scott's second best book for boys, though it is not so very much better than "The Abbot." The way Scott's boys ran their swords into all impertinent persons is grand. Schoolmasters would have had to be careful with them.

Just as the boy has his desert island period, there comes a time when, in imagination, he must take to the backwoods. He wants scalps. Kingston was of some assistance to boys in this condition; but Kingston, though he wrote, perhaps, more books than any other man of his day, had little humor, and if he finished one story at eight o'clock, was ready to begin another at half-past. He produced all kinds of boys' books of fair merit, but none that made one wonder why the Government did not name a star after him. Captain Mayne Reid was exciting, with his headless horseman, but he was lurid, dragged in horrors, had little of the true boyish spirit. They must both be waved aside to allow of the entrance of a quiet-looking backwoodsman, with an eagle eye, who chuckles to himself, but never laughs. Off with your hats, for you are in the presence of him who was called severally Deerslayer, Hawkeye, Pathfinder. This is one of the two or three really great figures in boys' books. Some think Hawthorne, some Mrs. Beecher Stowe, some Mr. Howells, the greatest American writer of fiction. For my part, I declare for Fenimore Cooper. He

alone has produced characters that will live. Scott never had a better than the Pathfinder. Have we not all lain in the long grass with the hawk-eyed man of the unerring rifle? We have sat round his fire, the Serpent in our company. We have been on a boat with him on queer moonlight nights, when he was the deerslayer; we have been with him at the burial of the last of the Mohicans; we have seen him old and done in "The Prairie." To me he is one of the immortals.

Before or after he has been on the warpath with the Mohicans, the boy bethinks himself of a life on the ocean wave. Then it is time to ask at the library for "one of Marryat's;" any one will do, so long as you can get all the others by and by. Mr. David Hannay, son of a brilliant father not soon to be forgotten in Edinburgh—the late James Hannay, of the *Courant*—was complaining the other day that Marryat has hardly the position in literature that he deserves. This is, perhaps, true. One hears more nowadays of smaller men; but among boys, it may be presumed, Marryat is as popular as ever. He is one of the happy authors who can be got at sixpence. I was lately told that Marryat was coarse, which so amazed me that I re-read some of his books. I found things in them that the boy sees not at all. The coarseness is of the rough-and-ready kind, put in hurriedly—for Marryat was a careless writer—but the books are essentially manly, and breed brave

boys. Which is your favorite? I believe I have a special weakness for "Percival Keene," whose practical jokes stick to the memory. But what of its kind could be better than "Jacob Faithful," with old Stapleton and his daughter, and old Tom and young Tom? "Peter Simple" would always be a favorite, though it contained nothing but the escape from the French prison, and most of us have revelled in the three-cornered duel in "Midshipman Easy." "Tom Cringle's Log" should be remembered with Marryat. The only sea-writer of to-day to mention with them is Mr. Clark Russell, and his delightful early books were much his best. He always has a sentimental mate and a beautiful girl on board.

THE LOST WORKS OF GEORGE MEREDITH.

"CHLOE, and Other Tales; with an Essay on the Comic Spirit," by George Meredith, is a book publishers have owed the world for nearly ten years. Since the early summer of 1879 Mr. Meredith has written no short stories, and apparently he has permanently stayed his hand. The whole of the book, without which the new edition of his works is seriously incomplete, lies buried in a defunct magazine. The essay "On the Idea of Comedy, and of the Uses of the Comic Spirit," is a lecture delivered by Mr. Meredith at the London Institution in 1877, and is so much the most brilliant and suggestive exposition of his idea of comedy that beside it the criticisms of other writers are of little account. There are three stories, one of them a pure comedy in Mr. Meredith's best manner; the second he calls "a realistic tale;" while the third and greatest, an episode in the history of Beau Beamish, is a noble tragedy that ends the life of one of the most lovable women this author has ever drawn. Are a hundred thousand words of a master's writings to perish of

neglect? Although the magazine is dead, why should all its trophies be buried with it?

Here there is no intention to discuss Mr. Meredith's position in letters, only an argument that these three stories have almost as much title to represent him as his longer novels. The comedy is "The Case of General Ople and Lady Camper." Of these two delightfully contrasted characters it may be said, as Mr. Meredith has himself written of Miss Austen's Emma and her lover, that they "might walk straight into a comedy, were the plot arranged for them;" indeed, there is scene after scene in the story which leaves the vivid impression of an acted play. Cut out the author's comments, and a comedy for the stage remains, though not probably a comedy with sufficient guffaw in it to command success. The central idea is intensely comic. General Ople, having retired from the army, buys a riverside house, which he likes to call a "gentlemanly residence." His daughter, eighteen years old, keeps his house for him, and by and by he has for a neighbor an eccentric person, Lady Camper. The general puts her age down at forty, Elizabeth says fifty, and soon Ople is so interested in her ladyship (and himself) that he has no eyes for the love-affair growing up between his daughter and Lady Camper's nephew. He admires wealth, titles, and his own gallant way with ladies; soon his neighbor is his touchstone. Her attic is the only window that

has a view of his garden, so she asks him to lop a branch off one of his trees that she may spy into his grounds without having to ascend. Her object is to watch the meetings of her nephew and Elizabeth, but the blind general thinks he has made another conquest. She fancies he has come to talk of the young people, when he is really dressed for a proposal. But Lady Camper is quick, and can be outspoken. He compliments her on her morning bloom. "It can hardly be visible," she replies; "I have not painted yet." The infatuated man asks her hand in marriage, whereupon she informs him that she is seventy, the effect of which announcement on the general is "to raise him from his chair in a sitting posture as if he had been blown up." He is fifty-five. Being a fine gentleman, the general will not draw back, yet the young-looking old lady is not affected to sentiment. She will not suffer him to speak of his "gentlemanly residence," nor to say it is a "Bijou" (as if he were swearing); she shudders at such a word as "lady-friend" or "female," and is sarcastic when he clips "Thank you" down to "Thanks." They quarrel over the loves of Elizabeth and her officer, and the engagement is ended. The general is free again. "Now," he murmurs, with a sigh of relief, "I know the worst!"—but he does not. Her terrible ladyship goes abroad, and sends him from time to time a series of maddening sketches. They are satires on his self-contempla-

tion and on certain of his mannerisms. One cartoon represents him in a sentry-box, and while the English flag is borne along by a troop of shadows he is saying, "I say I should be very happy to carry it, but I cannot quit this gentlemanly residence." There are scenes between him and the moon, whom he tells of his amorous triumphs, asking her to say whether she is a "female," that she may be triumphed over. While he courts the moon he says, "In spite of her paint, I could not have conceived her age to be so enormous." He sends her his "thanks" for a piece of lunar green cheese, and points her out as "my lady-friend." Even when she returns home Lady Camper draws pictures of her lover in church, and then he is so heart-broken that he, the best-dressed of men, goes to a garden-party without a collar or necktie. Tragedy is averted by their getting married, her ladyship now explaining that she is little over forty. To shame him of selfishness she has forced him to think of himself night and day—a homœopathic cure. She is as complex as he is simple, but she accepts him because she is an artist and he is picturesque.

Want of space compels us to pass by "The House on the Beach," which contains one striking figure, a former shopkeeper, who, like the immortal "old Mel," wants to be a gentleman. But, unlike the tailor, he would be a gentleman on the cheap. The closing scene is great. This hero has been "pre-

sented." He loves to don his court dress in private, and he has it on when he is rescued from a flood that ruins him. The contrast between the costume and the wearer's condition haunts the memory; otherwise this is the least important story of the three.

"The Tale of Chloe" gives a picture of the wells as vivid as the pump-room scenes in "Harry Richmond." Beau Beamish is king at the wells when a great and aged nobleman arrives to ask his aid. His Grace had married lately a beautiful dairymaid, who wants to see life. The duke is willing to leave her at the wells under Mr. Beamish's protection, for of late she has yawned occasionally, and than that earthquake and saltpetre are less threatening. Mr. Beamish consents to put her in charge of one Chloe, who had loved a villain, named Caseldy, so well that she had impoverished herself to save him from prison. He has gone away, but she loves him still, and Beau Beamish speaks so enthusiastically of her virtue that the duke says, "She has, I see, preserved her comeliness." One of the wittiest scenes in the story shows Mr. Beamish and the exquisite Chloe bringing the duchess to the wells. They have met her outside the town, and seen her parting with a gallant, who turns out to be the faithless Caseldy. This gentleman appears at the wells to further his love affair with the duchess from the milk-pails, and as Chloe realizes what is going on she dies slowly

before our eyes, as it were, though the others understand nothing. The duchess agrees to elope with Caseldy. It is night, and Chloe is supposed to have retired to rest. Early morn finds the duchess ready, and, looking from her window, she can discern a coach in shadow in the street. In the dark room she feels her way toward the door. Her hand touches something that is not the handle. It hangs heavily like a gown. "Before any other alarm had struck her brain, the hand she felt with was in a palsy, her mouth gaped, her throat thickened, the dust-ball rose in her throat, and the effort to swallow it down and get breath kept her from acute speculation while she felt again, pinched, plucked at the thing, ready to laugh, ready to shriek. Above her head, all on one side, the thing had a round white top. Could it be a hand that her touch had slid across? An arm too! this was an arm! She clutched it, imagining that it clung to her. She pulled it to release herself from it, desperately she pulled, and a lump descended, and a flash of all the torn nerves of her body told her that a dead human body was upon her." That is how Chloe died. The author strikes a real tragic note; Beau Beamish is a memorable comedy figure, but Mr. Meredith could not have created Chloe had he not dug down to the very roots of human nature. Is she to be lost to posterity because the story of her life would only fill a hundred pages?

THE HUMOR OF DICKENS.

We have still with us in this country two novelists who may be called great a hundred years hence, and a few months ago one of them explained oddly why there is no Dickens nowadays. Even though I could write a "Martin Chuzzlewit," he said in effect, no magazine would print it. The editor would write to me saying that Mrs. Gamp, for instance, was vulgar, or worse, and must be struck out. If he was a good-natured editor, he would add that he did not object to her himself, but had to consider his public.

Another reason why there is no second Dickens is that immortals are always scarce. Despite those careful editors, many writers have attempted to be Dickens over again, and only very lately have they realized that if they are to be great they must find out a way for themselves. Imitation of Dickens lasted long, but it seemed to have gone out, which is well, for the trick was easy to writers and exasperating to readers. It did Dickens harm. Who has not read a capital imitation of Dickens's humor that nevertheless did not make him laugh? Who has not read a beautiful imitation of Dickens's pathos that nevertheless did not make him cry? Yet the

man or woman who has neither laughed nor cried with Dickens has missed a birthright. By all means imitate Dickens, one might say to young novelists, if you can. This, be it noted, however, is only another way of saying, "I have no objection, sir, to your being a genius." Imitation would be an admirable thing if it took you all the way. So far it has only helped small writers to repeat the mannerisms of great writers. You are not really another Stevenson, though you wear a velvet coat. It is more difficult than this.

Of all the novelists that ever lived Dickens was the keenest observer. If he and Scott and Thackeray and George Meredith had gone out for a stroll together, he would have seen more that was worth taking note of than any of them, though he could not always have used it to more effect. Scott would have seen its picturesque side best. Thackeray would have sighed to observe that it would not have happened had not some lady pretended to have three servants when she had only one, and Mr. Meredith would have had it inside out. But Dickens would have felt it most, and would have missed nothing in it that was on the surface. Its comic aspect would have been more to him than to the others, and its pathetic side, too. Probably if you had been a witness of the incident which all four writers subsequently introduced into a story, you would decide that Dickens's picture was the

truest, and hence the best. Probably, too, you would be quite wrong. There is a general notion that we meet Dickens's characters more frequently in real life than the characters of any other novelist. Few of us have not had occasion to say at some period of our life that we knew a Pecksniff. The leader-writers are constantly calling certain politicians Micawbers, and at general elections the candidates who win only moral victories are all Mark Tapleys. Silas Marners are uncommon. We seldom call our friends (even behind their backs) Joseph Sedley, and we could call them Sir Willoughby Patterne to their face, for they would not understand the inference. Yet are there many Marners, Sedleys, and Patternes in the world, and not one Micawber. With very few exceptions, Dickens's best characters are caricatures. They are not nearly so human as the Marners, and therefore to the hasty reader they are much more real. This seems curious reasoning, but it is true. Of Dickens it has been said that his characters are only characteristics. He introduces to us a man who shows his teeth, and henceforth the teeth are the man. When we see a man showing his teeth, we remember Carker. Dickens was also fond of ticketing his characters with a catch-phrase, often repeated with quaint effect, often merely an irritation. It is Micawber's favorite remark that we recall him by, and the same can be said of Mr. Toots. Take away many of the

Dickens catch-phrases, and you kill the man who uses them. This is because he never was a man, but only the thousandth part of one. Micawber is no more a complete human being than a button is a suit of clothes. Fielding gives us the whole man, and for that very reason his characters do not take such grip of the memory. It is only to the superficial observer that we can be distinguished from each other by hard and fast lines. The one of us is not black and the other white, and a third and fourth red and blue, as Dickens paints us. For every point of difference we have a dozen in common, and thus the novelist who draws a complete man never creates a figure that stands out from all other figures. He aims not at producing beings theatrically effective, less at representing a man indeed than at representing man. This is the difference in object between Dickens and Mr. Meredith.

Dickens's method suited him because he had humor sufficient to supply a nation. All of us have some foible (which may be what makes us lovable), and Dickens saw it, and made a man of it. Where he misses its comic aspect his failure is utter, and now and again he does fail dolefully, through insisting on making that comic which is not comic. His humorous way of looking at things, which has been the joy of millions, occasionally undid him. He felt compelled to produce comic copy, and when he had no milk he sold water. The first chapter of

"Martin Chuzzlewit" is about the most melancholy reading in fiction. In all Dickens there is nothing else quite so forced, though often we are asked to laugh and cannot. To dwell on the occasions where Dickens's humor failed him is, however, to waste our words, for he succeeds a hundred times for every failure.

But few seek to dispute Dickens's pre-eminence as a humorist, except such as do not know how to laugh. It is only to be noted in passing that perhaps once a year a man is born who has the sense of humor and yet does not enjoy Dickens. Disraeli was one of these. When we come, however, to the discussion of Dickens's pathos we take sides. We may revel in "Pickwick," and yet find Paul Dombey sickening. Dickens's pathos, indeed, is usually of the cheapest kind, for it is forced and deliberate, because he is determined to make us cry as loud as he can make us laugh. He introduces children into his stories that he may kill them to slow music. He may be compared to the actors who, if they think they are good at dying, insist on making an act of it. He tells us himself that he wept over little Paul's death, and it is certain that thousands have wept over it since, especially if it was read aloud by some skilled reader who knew when to let his voice break. But it is a maudlin chapter, and betrays a weakness in the author who shows a readiness to dabble in this morbid manner. We would

not think the better of a doctor who invited us, for a treat, to step into an infirmary and watch a little boy dying. This is what Dickens does, and he also requests us to observe how prettily he can drop into poetry over the bedside. Here essentially you find a wide divergence in the novels of Sir Walter Scott. The Wizard of the North was naturally incapable of the sickly sentimentality which casts a blemish on many of Dickens's pages. A healthy nature rebels against it, and there is certainly something unmanly in Dickens's fondness for such scenes.

Many times, of course, Dickens is most tender, as in numberless passages in the boyhood of David Copperfield. Were he not, we would have to allow that the connection between humor and pathos is less close than had been thought. It is only the punsters of the comic papers who can be funny often and serious never. They are not real humorists; at the best they are merely wits. Humor and pathos are the children of sympathy (which only produces twins), and Dickens was one of the most sympathetic of men; certainly the most sympathetic of the great English novelists. The reason why his humor is better than his pathos is that he was a caricaturist. With him everything is larger than life. Now humor may be of the best kind though it exaggerates, but pathos can never be larger than life-size. Where Dickens's pathos

is subdued it rings true, but where he casts a strong light on it it is lurid in the colors of melodrama.

The later works of Dickens are much better constructed than their predecessors; the writing is more artistic, and the thread of the story less broken. They are, therefore, some hold, better books. But surely this is not true. "Pickwick" is flung together "anyhow," so that we could still enjoy it though we began at the last chapter and journeyed onward to the first. There are hundreds of pages in "Martin Chuzzlewit" and "Nicholas Nickleby" that could be cut out without interfering with the plot. But it is these incidental details that give us Dickens at his best. They are the immortal part of him. What the hostler at the inn or the man on the coach said is for reading every year, while the murder and what led to it interest us but once. Jonas Chuzzlewit gives us sensation and a headache, but Mark Tapley gives us a friend for life and Pecksniff haunts our mirthful moments in common with Pickwick. Thus, though as stories the later books are more ingenious, they do not compensate for the lack of humorous detail. The earlier novels had less art, but they were fresher.

In one respect Dickens and Scott may be compared. They are the most wholesome of the novelists. No other writers of fiction in this country

have done so much good. Neither was "deep." Their optimism was at times, doubtless, somewhat shallow, but they were great men, who loved their fellow-creatures and ever used their capacities to a noble purpose.

GRETNA GREEN REVISITED.

THE one bumpy street of Springfield, despite its sparse crop of grass, presents to this day a depressed appearance, a relic of the time when it doubled up under a weight of thundering chariots. At the well-remembered, notorious Queen's Head I stood in the gathering gloaming, watching the road run yellow, until the last draggled hen had spluttered through the pools to roost, and the mean row of whitewashed, shrunken houses across the way had sunk into the sloppy ground, as they have been doing slowly for half a century, or were carried away in a rush of rain. Soaking weed hung in lifeless bunches over the hedges of spears that line the road from Gretna; on sodden Canobie Lea, where Lochinvar's steed would to-day have had to wade through yielding slush, dirty piles of congealed snow were still reluctant to be gone; and gnarled tree-trunks, equally with palings that would have come out of the ground with a sloppy gluck, showed a dank and cheerless green. Yesterday the rooks dinned the air, and the parish of Gretna witnessed such a marrying and giving in marriage as might have flung it back fifty years. Elsewhere such a solemn cawing round the pulpit

on the tree-tops would denote a court of justice, but in the vicinity of Springfield, it may be presumed, the thoughts of the very rooks run on matrimony.

A little while ago Willum Lang, a postman's empty letter-bag on his back, and a glittering drop trembling from his nose, picked his way through the puddles, his lips pursed into a portentous frown, and his gray head bowed professionally in contemplation of a pair of knock-kneed but serviceable shanks. A noteworthy man Willum, son of Simon, son of David, grandson by marriage of Joseph Paisley, all famous "blacksmiths" of Gretna Green. For nigh a century Springfield has marked time by the Langs, and still finds "In David Lang's days" as forcible as "when Plancus was consul." Willum's predecessors in office reserved themselves for carriage runaways, and would shake the lids from their coffins if they knew that Willum had to marry the once despised "pedestrians." "Even Elliot," David Lang would say, "could join couples who came on foot," and that, of course, was very hard on the poor pedestrian, for greater contempt no man ever had for rival than David for Elliot, unless, indeed, it was Elliot's for David. But those were the great clattering days, when there were four famous marrying shops: the two rival inns of Springfield, that washed their hands of each other across the street; Mr. Linton's aristocratic quarters at Gretna Hall, and the toll-bar on the right side of the

Sark. A gentleman who had requisitioned the services of the toll-keeper many years ago recently made a journey across the border to shake his fist at the bar, and no one in Gretna Green can at all guess why. Far-seeing Murray, the sometime priest of Gretna Hall, informed me, succeeded Beattie at the toll-house in 1843, and mighty convenient friends in need they both proved for the couples who dashed across the border with foaming fathers at their coaches' wheels. The stone bridge flashed fire to rushing hoofs, the exulting pursuers, knowing that a half-mile brae still barred the way to Springfield, saw themselves tearing romantic maidens from adventurers' arms, when Beattie's lamp gleamed in the night, the horses stopped as if an invisible sword had cleft them in twain, the maid was whisked like a bundle of stolen goods into the toll-bar, and her father flung himself in at the door in time to be introduced to his son-in-law. Oh, Beattie knew how to do his work expeditiously, and fat he waxed on the proceeds. In his later days marrying became the passion of his life, and he never saw a man and a maid together without creeping up behind them and beginning the marriage service. In Springfield there still are men and women who have fled from him for their celibacy, marriage in Scotland being such an easy matter that you never know when they may not have you. In joining couples for the mere pleasure of the thing, Simon brought high fees into disrepute,

and was no favorite with the rest of the priesthood. That half-mile nearer the border, Jardine admits, gave the toll-bar a big advantage, but for runaways who could risk another ten minutes, Gretna Hall was the place to be married at.

Willum Lang's puckered face means business. He has been sent for by a millworker from Langholm, who, having an hour to spare, thinks he may as well drop in at the priest's and get spliced; or by an innocent visitor wandering through the village in search of the mythical smithy; or by a lawyer who shakes his finger threateningly at Willum (and might as well have stayed at home with his mother). From the most distant shores letters reach him regarding Gretna marriages, and if Willum dislikes monotony he must be getting rather sick of the stereotyped beginning, "I think your charges very extortionate." The stereotyped ending, "but the sum you asked for is enclosed," is another matter. It is generally about midnight that the rustics of the county rattle Willum's door off it's snib and, bending over his bed, tell him to arise and marry them. His hand is crossed with silver coin, for gone are the bridegrooms whose gold dribbled in a glittering cascade from fat purses to a horny palm; and then, with a sleepy neighbor, a cold hearth, and a rattling cynic of a window for witnesses, he does the deed. Elsewhere I have used these words to describe the scene: "The room in

which the Gretna Green marriages have been celebrated for many years is a large rude kitchen, but dimly lighted by a small 'bole' window of lumpy glass that faces an ill-fitting back door. The draught generated between the two cuts the spot where the couples stand, and must prove a godsend to flushed and flurried bridegrooms. A bed—wooden and solid, ornamented with divers shaped and divers colored clothes dependent from its woodwork like linen hung on a line to dry—fills a lordly space. The monster fireplace retreats bashfully before it into the opposite wall, and a grimy cracked ceiling looks on a bumpy stone floor, from which a cleanly man could eat his porridge. One shabby wall is happily hid by the drawers in which Lang keeps his books; and against the head of the bed an apoplectic Mrs. Langtry in a blue dress and yellow stockings, reminding the public that Simon Lang's teas are the best, shudders at her reflection in the looking-glass that dangles opposite her from a string." The signboard over a snuffy tavern that attempted to enter into rivalry with the Queen's Head depicts the priest on his knees going through the church marriage services, but the Langs have always kept their method of performing the ceremony a secret between themselves and the interested persons, and the artist in this case was doubtless drawing on his imagination. The picture is discredited by the scene of the wedding being made in a smithy, when

it is notorious that the "blacksmith" has cut the tobacco plug, and caught fish in the Solway, and worked at the loom, the last, and the toll-bar, but never wielded Vulcan's hammer. The popular term is thus a mystery, though a witness once explained, in a trial, to Brougham, that Gretna marriages were a welding of heat. Now the welding of heat is part of a blacksmith's functions.

It is not for Willum Lang to censure the Langholm millworkers, without whose patronage he would be as a priest superannuated, but if they could be got to remember whom they are married to, it would greatly relieve his mind. When standing before him they are given to wabbling unsteadily on their feet, and to taking his inquiry whether the maiden on their right is goodly in their sight for an offer of another "mutchkin:" and next morning they sometimes mistake somebody else's maiden for their own. When one of the youth of the neighborhood takes to him a helpmate at Springfield his friend often whiles away the time by courting another, and when they return to Langholm things are sometimes a little mixed up. The priest, knowing what is expected of him, is generally able when appealed to, to "assign to each bridegroom his own;" but one shudders to think what complications may arise when Willum's eyes and memory go. These weddings are, of course, as legal as though Lang were Archbishop of Canterbury,

but the clergymen shake their heads, and sometimes —as indeed was the case even in the great days—a second marriage by a minister is not thought amiss.

About the year 1826, the high road to Scotland ran away from Springfield. Weeds soon afterward sprouted in the street, and though the place's reputation died hard, its back had been broken. Runaways skurried by oblivious of its existence, and at a convenient point on the new road shrewd John Linton dropped Gretna Hall. Springfield's convenient situation had been its sole recommendation, and when it lost that it was stranded. The first entry in the Langs' books dates back to 1771, when Joseph Paisley represented the priesthood, but the impetus to Gretna marriages had been given by the passing of Lord Hardwicke's act, a score of years before. Legend speaks of a Solway fisherman who taught tobacconist Paisley the business. Prior to 1754, when the law put its foot down on all unions not celebrated by ministers of the Church of England, there had been no need to resort to Scotland, for the chaplains of the fleet were anticipating the priests of Gretna Green, and doing a roaring trade. Broadly speaking, it was as easy between the Reformation and 1745 to get married in the one country as in the other. The Marriage Act changed all that. It did a real injustice to non-members of the Established Church, and only cured the disease in one place to let it break out in another. Lord Hard-

wicke might have been a local member of Parliament, pushing a bill through the House "for the promotion of Larceny and Rowdyism at Gretna Green." For the greater part of a century, there was a whirling of coaches and a clattering of horses across the border, after which came marriage in England before a registrar, and an amendment of the Scotch law that required residence north of the Sark, on the part of one of the parties, for twenty-one days before the ceremony took place. After that the romance of Gretna Green was as a tale that was told. The latter half of the last century, and the first twenty years of this, were thus the palmy days of Springfield, for after Gretna Hall hung out its signboard, the Langs were oftener seen at the "big house" than in the double-windowed parlor of the Queen's Head.

The present landlord of this hostelry, a lightsome host, troubled with corns, who passes much of his time with a knife in one hand and his big toe in the other, is nephew of that Beattie who saw his way to bed by the gleam of post-boy's lamps, and spent his days unsnibbing the Queen's Head door to let runaways in, and barring it to keep their pursuers out. Much depends on habit, and Beattie slept most soundly to the drone of the priest in his parlor, and the rub-a-dub of baffled parents on his window-sills. His nephew, also a Beattie, brings his knife with him into the immortal room, where peers of the

realm have mated with country wenches, and fine ladies have promised to obey their father's stable-boys, and two Lord Chancellors of England with a hundred others have blossomed into husbands, and one wedding was celebrated of which neither Beattie nor the world takes any account. There are half a dozen tongues in the inn—itself a corpse now that wearily awaits interment—to show you where Lord Erskine gambolled in a table-cloth, while David Lang united him in the bonds of matrimony with his housekeeper, Sarah Buck. There is the table at which he composed some Latin doggerel in honor of the event, and the doubtful signature on a cracked pane of glass. A strange group they must have made—the gaping landlord at the door, Mrs. Buck, the superstitious, with all her children in her arms, David Lang rebuking the Lord Chancellor for posing in the lady's bonnet, Erskine in his table-cloth skipping around the low-roofed room in answer, and Christina Johnstone, the female witness, thinking sadly that his lordship might have known better. Here, too, Lord Eldon galloped one day with his "beloved Bessy;" and it is not uninteresting to note that though he came into the world eighteen months after Lord Erskine, he paid Gretna Green a business visit nearly fifty years before him. Lang's books are a veritable magic-lantern, and the Queen's Head the sheet on which he casts his figures. The slides change. Joseph Paisley sees his shrewd assistant,

David Lang, marry his granddaughter, and dies characteristically across the way. David has his day, and Simon, his son, succeeds him; and in the meantime many a memorable figure glides shadow-like across the screen. The youth with his heart in his mouth is Lord George Lambton. It is an Earl of Westmoreland that plants his shoulders against the door, and tells the priest to hurry. The foot that drums on the floor is Lady Alicia Parson's. A son of Lord Chief Justice Ellenborough makes way for his own son; a daughter follows in the very footsteps of her father, only a few hours between them. A daughter of Archdeacon Philpot arrives at four o'clock in the morning, and her companion forgets to grease the landlord's hand. The Hon. Charles Law just misses Lord Deerhurst. There are ghosts in cocked hats, and naval and military uniform, in muslin, broadcloth, tweed and velvet, gold lace and pigskin; swords flash, pistols smoke, steaming horses bear bleeding riders out of sight, and a thousand forms flit weird and shadowy through the stifling room.

The dinner of the only surviving priest of Gretna Hall frizzled under the deft knife of his spouse as he rubbed his hands recently over the reminiscences of his youth. Willum Lang never officiated at the Hall. Intelligent Jardine, full of years and honors, now enjoys his ease, not without a priestly dignity, on a kitchen sofa, in his pocket edition of a home at

Springfield, and it is perhaps out of respect to his visitor that he crowns his hoary head with a still whiter hat. His arms outstretched to the fire, he looks, by the flashes of light, in his ingle-nook a Shakespearian spirit crouching over an unholy pot, but his genial laugh betrays him, and his comely wife does not scruple to recall him to himself when he threatens to go off in an eternal chuckle. A stalwart border-woman she, in short petticoats and delightful cap, such as in the killing times of the past bred the Johnny Armstrongs and the terrible moss-troopers of the border. A storehouse of old ballads, and a Scotchwoman after Scott's own heart.

The day that Gretna Hall became an inn, its landlord felt himself called to the priesthood, and as long as he and his son remained above ground, marriage was the heaviest item in their bills. But when Gretna knew them no more, Jardine's chance had come. Even at Springfield the line has always been drawn at female priests, and from the "big house" used to come frequent messages to the shoemaker with its mistress's compliments, and would he step up at once. The old gentleman is a bit of a dandy in his way, and it is pleasant to know that Nature herself gave him on those occasions a hint when it was time to dress. The rush for him down dark fields and across the Headless Cross was in a flurry of haste, but in the still night the rumble of a distant coach had been borne to him over the howes

and meadows, and Jardine knew what that meant as well as the marriage service. Sometimes the coaches came round by Springfield, when the hall was full, and there was a tumbling out and in again by trembling runaways at rival inns. Even the taverns have run couples, and up and down the sleety street horses pranced and panted in search of an idle priest. Jardine remembers one such nightmare time when the clatter of a pursuing vehicle came nearer and nearer, and a sweet young lady in the Queen's Head flung up her hands to heaven. Crash went her true lover's fist through a pane of glass to awaken the street (which always slept with one eye open) with the hoarse wail, "A hundred pounds to the man that marries me!" But big as was the bribe, the speed of the pursuers was greater, and the maiden's father looking in at the inn at an inconvenient moment called her away to fulfil another engagement. The Solway lies white from Gretna Hall like a sheet of mourning paper, between edges of black trees and hills. The famous long, low room still looks out on an ageing park, but they are only ghosts that join hands in it now, and it is a clinging to old days that makes the curious moon peep beneath the blind. The priest and the unbidden witness still are, but brides and bridegrooms come no more. To the days of his youth Jardine had to fling back his memory to recall the gravel springing from the wheels of Wake-

field's flying chariot. The story is told in Hutchinson's "Chronicles of Gretna Green," the first volume of which leads up to but does not broach the subject, and is common property at Springfield. The adventurer's dupe was an affectionate schoolgirl, on whose feelings he worked by representing himself as the one friend who could save her father from ruin and disgrace. The supposed bankrupt was said to have taken flight to Scotland, and the girl of fifteen, jumping into Wakefield's coach at Liverpool, started with him in pursuit. A more graceless rascal never was, for at Carlisle the adventurer swore that he had talked with Miss Turner's father in a hotel where he was lying hidden from the sheriff's officers, and that the fugitive's wish was that she should, without delay, accept Mr. Wakefield's hand. The poor lassie, frantic with anxiety, was completely gulled, and on March 8, 1826, Wakefield's coach drew up at Gretna Hall. Too late came the pursuit to stop the marriage, but the runaways were traced to France, and the law soon had the husband of a week by the heels. He had trusted, like all his brotherhood, to the lady's father making the best of it; and so, perhaps, he did; for the adventurer's address for the next three years was—Newgate, London.

Spiders of both sexes kept their nets at Gretna Green, but a tragedy was only enacted at the hall between a score of comedies; and they were gener-

ally love-sick youths and maidens who interrupted the priest to ask if that was not the "so—sound of wh—wheels on the gravel walk?" A couple whom it would almost have been a satisfaction to marry without a fee (for the mere example of the thing) was that which raced from the south of England with the lady's father. When they reached the top of a hill his arms were gesticulating at the bottom, and they never turned one corner without seeing his steaming horse take another. Poor was the fond lover (dark his prospects at Gretna Green in consequence) but brave the maid, to whom her friends would insist on leaving money, which was the cause of the whole to-do. The father, looking on the swain with suspicious eye, took to dreaming of postilions, high-roads, blacksmiths and Gretna Green. He would not suffer his daughter to move from his sight, and even to dances he escorted her in his private carriage, returning for her (for he was a busy man) at night. Quick of invention were the infuriated lovers. Threading the mazes of a dance, the girl was one evening snatched from her partner's arms by the announcement that her father's carriage barred the way below. A hurried explanation of why he had come so soon, a tripping down the stairs with trembling limbs into a close coach, a maiden in white in her lover's arms, and hey-ho for Gretna Green. Jardine is mellowed with a gentle cynicism, and sometimes he breaks off in his reminiscences to

wonder what people want to be married for. The Springfield priest, he chuckles, is a blacksmith at whom love cannot afford to laugh. Ay, friend Jardine, but what about the blacksmith who laughs at love?

Half a century ago Mr. McDiarmid, a Scotch journalist of repute, loosened the tongue of a Springfield priest with a bowl of toddy. The result was as if the sluice had been lifted bodily from a dam, and stories (like the whiskey) flowed like water. One over-curious *paterfamilias* there was who excused his visit to the village of weddings on the ground that he wished to introduce to the priest a daughter who might one day require his services. "And sure enough," old Elliot, who entered into partnership with Simon Lang, crowed to his toddy-ladle, "I had her back with a younger man in the matter of three months!" There lives, too, in Springfield's memory the tale of the father who bolted with an elderly spinster, and returning to England passed his daughter and her lover on the way. Dark and wintry was the night, the two coaches rattled by, and next morning four persons who had gone wrong opened the eyes of astonishment.

When David Lang was asked during Wakefield's trial how much he had been paid for discharging the duties of priest, he replied, pleasantly, "£20 or £30, or perhaps £40; I cannot say to a few pounds." This was pretty well, but there are authenticated

cases in which £100 was paid. The priests had no fixed fee, and charged according to circumstances. If business was slack and the bridegroom not pressing, they lowered their charges, but where the bribed post-boys told them of high rank, hot pursuit, and heavy purses, they squeezed their dupes remorselessly. It is told of Joseph Paisley that when on his death-bed he heard the familiar rumble of coaches into the village, he shook death from him, ordered the runaways to approach his presence, married three couples from his bed, and gave up the ghost with three hundred pounds in his palsied hands. Beattie at the toll-bar, on the other hand, did not scorn silver fees, and as occasion warranted the priests have doubtless ranged in their charges from half-a-crown and a glass of whiskey to a hundred pounds.

Though the toll-bar only at rare intervals got wealthy pairs into its clutches, Murray had not been long installed in office when pockets crammed with fees made him waddle as heavily as a duck. Fifty marriages a month was no uncommon occurrence at Gretna at that time, and it was then that the mansion was built which still stands about a hundred yards on the English side of the Sark. The toll-keeper, to whom it owes its existence, erected it for a hotel that would rival Gretna Hall, and prove irresistible to the couples who, on getting married on the Scotch side, would have to pass it

on their return journey. But the alterations in the Marriage Laws marred the new hotel's chances, and Murray found that he had over-reached himself. Perhaps one reason why he no longer prospered was because he pursued a niggardly policy with the postilions, ostlers, and other rapscallions who demanded a share of the booty. The Langs knew what they were about far too well to quarrel with the post-boys, and stories are still current in Springfield of these faithful youths tumbling their employers into the road rather than take them to a "blacksmith" with whom they did not deal.

There is no hope for Gretna. Springfield was and is the great glory of its inhabitants. Here ran the great wall of Adrian, the scene of many a tough fight in the days of stone weapons and skin-clad Picts. The Debatable Land, sung by Trouvere and Troubadour, is to-day but a sodden moss, in which no King Arthur strides fearfully away from the "grim lady" of the bogs; and moss-troopers, grim and gaunt and terrible, no longer whirl with lighted firebrands into England. With a thousand stars the placid moon lies long drawn out and drowned at the bottom of the Solway, without a lovesick maid to shed a tear; the chariots that once rattled and flashed along the now silent road were turned into firewood decades ago, and the runaways, from a Prince of Capua to a beggar-maid, are rotten and forgotten.

THOUGHTFUL BOYS MAKE THOUGHTFUL MEN.

URQUHART is a boy who lives in fear that his friends and relations will send him the wrong birthday presents. Before his birthday came round this year, he dropped them pretty broad hints as to the kind of gifts he would prefer, supposing they meant to remember the occasion. He worked his people differently, according to the relationship that existed between him and them. Thus to his mother he simply wrote, "A fishing-rod is what I want;" but to an uncle, from whom there was only the possibility of the present, he said, "By the way, next Monday week is my birthday, and my mother is going to send me a fishing-rod. Wouldn't it be jolly rot if any other body sent me a fishing-rod?—Your affectionate and studious nephew, Thomas Urquhart." To an elderly lady, with whom he had once spent part of his summer holiday, he wrote "By the bye" (he always came to the point with by the bye) "next Monday week is my birthday. I am wondering if anybody will send me a cake like the ones you bake so beautifully."

That lady should, of course, figuratively have

punched Urquhart's head, but his communication charmed her. She did not, however, send him a cake. He had a letter from her in a few days, in which, without referring to his insinuating remarks about his birthday and her cakes, she expressed a hope that he was working hard. Urquhart thought this very promising, and sent a reply that undid him. "I am sweating," he said, "no end; and I think there is no pleasure like perusing books. When the other chaps go away to play, I stay at the school and peruse books." After that Urquhart counted the old lady among his certainties, and so she was, after a manner. On his birthday he received a gift from her, and also a letter, in which she said that her original intention had been to send him a cake. "But your nice letter," she went on, "in which you say you are fond of reading, reminds me that you are getting to be a big boy, so I send you a book instead." Urquhart anxiously undid the brown paper in which the book was wrapped. It was a volume of mild biographies, entitled, "Thoughtful Boys Make Thoughtful Men."

From its first appearance among us, this book caused a certain amount of ill-feeling. I learned by accident that Urquhart, on the strength of the lady's letter, had stated for a fact to his comrades that she was going to send him a cake. He had also taken Fleming Secundus to a pastry-cook's in the vicinity

of the school, and asked him to turn his eyes upon a cake which had the place of honor in the centre of the window. Secundus admitted with a sigh that it was a beauty. Without comment Urquhart led him to our local confectioner's, and pointed out another cake. Secundus again passed favorable criticism, the words he used, I have reason to believe, being "Oh, Crikey!" By this time Urquhart had exhausted the shops of an interesting kind in our neighborhood, and he and his companion returned to the school. For a time Urquhart said nothing, but at last he broke the silence. "You saw yon two cakes?" he asked Secundus, who replied, with a smack of the lips, in the affirmative. "Then let me tell you," said Urquhart, solemnly, "that the two of them rolled together don't come within five miles of the cake I'm to get on my birthday." Tremendous news like this spreads through a school like smoke, and Urquhart was courted as he had never been before. One of the most pitiful cases of toadyism known to me was witnessed that very day in the foot-ball field. I was playing in a school match on the same side as Urquhart and a boy called Cocky Jones by his associates because of his sublime impertinence to his master. While Urquhart was playing his shoe-lace became loosened, and he stooped to tie it. "I say, Urquhart," cried Cocky, "let me do that for you!" It will thus be seen, taking one thing with another, that Urquhart's con-

fidence in the old lady had raised high hopes. "Is this the day Urquhart gets his cake?" the "fellows" asked each other. Consider their indignation when he got, instead, "Thoughtful Boys Make Thoughtful Men." Secundus refused to speak to him; Williamson, Green, Robbins, Tosh, and others scowled as if he had stolen their cake; Cocky Jones kicked him and bolted.

The boy who felt the disappointment most was, however, Urquhart himself. He has never been a shining light in his classes, but that day he stumbled over the Latin grammar at every step. From nine to ten he was quiet and sullen, like one felled by the blow. It is, I believe, notorious that in a fair fight Cocky Jones could not stand up before Urquhart for a moment; yet, when Cocky kicked, Urquhart did not pursue him. Between ten and eleven Urquhart had a cynical countenance, which implied that his faith in humanity was gone. By twelve he looked fierce, as if he meant to write his benefactress, and give her a piece of his mind. I saw him during the dinner-hour in hot controversy with Green and Tosh, who were evidently saying that he had deceived them. From this time he was pugnacious, like one determined to have it out with somebody, and as he can use his fists, this mood made his companions more respectful. Fleming Secundus is his particular chum, and after the first bitterness of disappointment, Secundus returned to

his allegiance. He offered to mark Cocky Jones's face, I fancy, for I saw him in full pursuit of Cocky in the playground. Having made it up, he and Urquhart then discussed the matter calmly in a corner. They had several schemes before them. One was to send the book back, saying that Urquhart had already a copy of it.

"But, I haven't," said Urquhart.

"Williamson has read it, though," said Secundus, as if that was much the same thing.

"But though we did send it back," Urquhart remonstrated, "the chances are that she would send me another book in its place."

His faith, you see, had quite gone.

"You could tell her you had got such a lot of books that you would prefer a cake for a change."

Urquhart said that would be putting it too plain.

"Well, then," said Secundus, "even though she did send you another book, it would perhaps be a better one than that. Tell her to send 'The Boy Crusoes.' I haven't read it."

"I have, though," said Urquhart.

"Well, she could send 'The Prairie Hunters.'"

"She's not the kind," said Urquhart. "It's always these improving books she buys."

Ultimately the two boys agreed upon a line of action which was hardly what the reader might expect. Urquhart wrote letters of thanks to all those who had remembered his birthday, and to the old

lady the letter which passed through my hands read as follows:

"DEAR MISS——: I sit down to thank you very faithfully for your favor, namely, the book entitled 'Thoughtful Boys Make Thoughtful Men.' It is a jolly book, and I like it no end better than a cake, which would soon be ate up, and then nothing to show for it. I am reading your beautiful present regular, and hoping it will make me a thoughtful boy so as I may be a thoughtful man, no more at present,

"I am, Dear Miss——,

"Your very sincere friend,

"THOMAS URQUHART."

Our boys generally end up their letters in some such way as that, it being a method of making their epistles cover a little more paper. As I feared, Urquhart's letter was merely diplomatic. He had not come around to the opinion that after all a book was better than the cake, but he had seen the point of Fleming's sudden suggestion, that the best plan would be to "keep in" with his benefactress. Secundus had shown that if Miss M—— was bothered about this year's present, she would be less likely to send anything next year, and this sank into Urquhart's mind. Hence the tone of his letter of thanks.

It remains to follow the inglorious career of this copy of "Thoughtful Boys Make Thoughtful Men."

First, Urquhart was openly contemptuous of it, and there seemed a probability of its only being used as a missile. Soon, however, he dropped hints that it was a deeply interesting story, following these hints up with the remark that he was open to offers. He and Fleming Secundus had quite a tiff about it, though they are again good friends. Secundus, it appears, had gone the length of saying that it was worth a shilling, and had taken it to his bed to make sure of this. Urquhart considered it as good as bought, but Secundus returned it to him next day. Examination of the book roused the suspicions of Urquhart, who charged Secundus with having read it by peeping between the pages, which, to enhance its commercial value, had remained uncut. This Secundus denied, but he had left the mark of his thumb on it. Eventually the book was purchased by Cocky Jones, but not without a row. Cocky went up to Urquhart one day and held out a shilling, saying that he would give it for "Thoughtful Boys Make Thoughtful Men." The owner wanted to take the shilling at once, and give up the book later in the day, but Cocky insisted on its being put into his hands immediately. That Jones should be anxious to become the possessor of an improving book surprised Urquhart, but in his haste to make sure of the shilling, he handed over "Thoughtful Boys Make Thoughtful Men." Within an hour of the striking of this bargain a rumor reached Urquhart's

ears that Cocky had resold the work for one and sixpence. Inquiries were instituted, which led to a discovery. At our school there is a youth called Dicky Jenkinson, who, though not exactly a thoughtful boy, has occasional aspirations in that direction. Being for the moment wealthy, Jenkinson had remarked, in the presence of Cocky, that one and sixpence would not be too much to give for Urquhart's copy of "Thoughtful Boys Make Thoughtful Men." Feeling his way cautiously, Cocky asked whether he meant that the book would be cheap at one and sixpence to anybody who wanted it, or whether he (Dicky) was willing and able to expend that sum on it. Thus brought to bay, Jenkinson solemnly declared that he meant to make Urquhart an offer that very day. Cocky made off to think this matter over, for he was aware that the book had been already offered to Fleming Secundus for a shilling. He saw that by taking prompt action he might clear sixpence before bedtime. Unfortunately, he was not able to buy the book from Urquhart, for he was destitute of means, and he knew it would be mere folly to ask Urquhart for credit. In these painful circumstances he took Robbins into his confidence. At first he merely asked Robbins to lend him a shilling, and Robbins merely replied that he would do no such thing. To show that the money would be returned promptly, Cocky then made a clean breast of it, after which Robbins was ready to lend

him an ear. Robbins, however, stipulated that he should get half of the spoils.

Cocky, as has been seen, got the book from Urquhart, but when it came to the point, Jenkinson was reluctant to part with the one and sixpence. In this extremity Cocky appealed to Robbins, who at once got hold of Dicky and threatened to slaughter him if he did not keep to his bargain. Thus frightened, Jenkinson bought the book.

On hearing of this, Urquhart considered that he had been swindled, and set off in quest of Cocky. That boy was not to be found, however, until his threepence had disappeared in tarts. I got to know of this affair through Robbins' backing up of Cocky, and telling Urquhart that nobody was afraid of him. A ring was immediately formed round Urquhart and Robbins, which I had the pleasure of breaking up.

Since I sat down to write the adventures of "Thoughtful Boys Make Thoughtful Men," I have looked through the book. Jenkinson read several chapters of it, and then offered it for next to nothing to anybody who had a fancy for being thoughtful. As no bidder was forthcoming, he in the end lost heart and presented it to the school library. A gentleman who visited us lately, and looked through the library, picked it up, and said that he was delighted to observe that the boys kept their books so clean. Yet not so long ago he was a boy at our school himself.

NDINTPILE PONT (?).

"WHAT would you say," wrote a certain editor to me last Friday, "to doing next a paper on Ndintpile Pont?"

I like the suggestion, but I can't make out what Ndintpile Pont is. This rather handicaps me, especially as I have a presentiment that it is not Ndintpile Pont at all. It looks like Ndintpile Pont. The editor in question's writing appears very easy to decipher if you hold it a little bit away, but, like the multiplication table, it is not so simple as it looks. The annoying thing is that he has written Ndintpile Pont with one dash of the pen, as if it were so well known that I could not possibly go wrong with it. Thus I have felt reluctant to write and ask him whether it really is Ndintpile Pont. I don't want him to think that I am not well up in the topics of the day. It would be injurious to my standing in the profession and might affect my balance at the bank. Always make it a rule, never to show your ignorance; wear a confident air, and convince the editor that you are just the man he is looking for.

But this unfortunate affair threatens to prove too

much for me. I have shown the editor's letter to several of my friends. I do this with a craft that is not natural to me. Instead of asking them openly if they can make out what these words are that look like Ndintpile Pont, I fling them the letter with affected carelessness, and say, "By the way, what do you think of that for the subject of an article?" While they read I put my hands over my face, as if I were thinking about something else, and watch them through my fingers. They take Ndintpile Pont in different ways. Sometimes they turn the letter upside down (after carefully glancing at me to see if I am observing them) or they try to read it sideways. This is satisfactory so far, for it shows that they are as much puzzled as I am, but it is no assistance. They end by asking me what this subject is that the editor proposes. Of course this foils me, and I have to reply in a careless tone, "Oh, Ndintpile Pont," implying that they must know what Ndintpile Pont is. One had the honesty to say he never heard of it, but most of them say, "Oh," or "Ah," as if they understood thoroughly, and a few have had the hardihood to ask me how I meant to treat it. I reply, blandly, "In the usual way," and that seems to satisfy them. Others to whom I have shown the letter say it is not "Ndintpile Pont," but "Henderson's Book," and that has rather startled me, for on re-examination "Pont" might be "Book," and as for "Ndintpile" it might

be anything. The more you look at it the more you feel this. Suppose it is Henderson's Book, who is Henderson, and where is his book? When they ask me this, I say that Henderson is a rising writer, but I am less ready with an answer when I put the question to myself.

One acquaintance, after reading the letter, said that he remembered an article on the same subject the week before in the *Daily News*. I brightened up at this, and asked him what point of view the *Daily News* looked at it from. His way of taking my question made me suspect that he was like the others, too self-satisfied to admit that he could not make the writing out. He replied, however, that the *Daily News* treated it, so far as he could recollect, in its political aspect, and presumed that I would discuss it rather in its social bearing. I admitted that that was my intention, and after he had gone I went to the office of the *Daily News* and examined the file. I could not, however, discover an article on Ndintpile Pont, or on anything at all like it. Had I been able to trust my friend, my position would now have been improved, for I would at least have known that the subject was one which could be treated from both a political and a social standpoint. On returning home I spread the letter out before me, and after looking at it for a long time, made up my mind that it was not "Pont," but "Polit." This doubtless was short for "Political."

Next morning I looked at it again, and then it seemed more like "Punt."

The last man I showed the letter to must have thought it was a lady's name, for he said, "Do you think she'll be pleased at your writing an article on her?" Though this question took me aback, I replied, with considerable presence of mind, that I was sure she would like it; and then he asked me if I knew her personally. I said I had known her intimately for years, and he said was she not a bit of an invalid, and I said one of her lungs was completely gone. That evening I drew up a list of all the celebrated women still alive that I could think of, and compared the names with Ndintpile Pont. The one that came nearest it was Mrs. Oliphant. The last four letters of her name are not so unlike Pont when you examine them with a hope that they are like it. Tack the "ile" of what seems to be the first word on to the "Pont," and you get "Ilepont." Then look at Ilepont as the editor has written it, and it might easily be Oliphant. That leaves "Ndintp" unaccounted for; but, after all, is it Ndintp? Is it not more like Margaret, which is Mrs. Oliphant's Christian name? I sat down to write about Mrs. Oliphant with a light heart, but before the first paragraph was finished I became doubtful again. Was Mrs. Oliphant an invalid? She is not, so far as I know; indeed, if she were, she could not write so much. On the whole, it

seemed rather a risky thing to trust to its being Mrs. Oliphant. More likely Ndintpile Pont is the name assumed by some lady writer. If so, it is a striking pseudonym. I could, of course, write a fancy article about her, remarking that it is quite unnecessary to tell the intelligent reader what Ndintpile Pont's real name is, for that is an open secret. Writers do such things, I am told, and it always flatters a reader to call him intelligent and take for granted that he knows what he does not know.

Having become despondent, I have confessed to a few particular friends that the editor has contrived to puzzle me. Looking at his suggestion in the light of that admission, they have all agreed on one point, that, whatever it is, it is certainly not Ndintpile Pont. One suggests that it is something Pond, and asks if I know anything about a pond. I remember once falling into one, so he thinks the editor wants me to describe what it felt like. Depend upon it, he says, the editor wants to know from one who has really gone through the experience what the sensation of being nearly drowned is like. They say it is a delightful death, but is it? I cannot think it is Pond, however, for, in the first place, the editor does not know that I once fell into one, and, besides, I was not nearly drowned. It was a mere puddle of water, and I was quite surprised to learn afterward that it was a pond.

It might certainly be Punt. I am living in a houseboat at present, and, of course, am frequently in punts. Is it "Fishing off a Punt," or "A Day in a Punt," or "Our Houseboat Punt?" Somehow it is difficult to feel certain that it is.

There are points of view from which it looks not unlike the name of a quack medicine for restoring the hair or making your child cry out in the night. Or is it a new soap? If so, I prefer it to any other, and it is matchless for the hands and complexion.

At all events, I hope there is nothing wrong about it. It sounds rather like treason. Probably I had better leave it alone. I have thought it over until the houseboat is going round and round, so my most honest course seems now to be to write to the editor, saying that I won't be able to do an article this month, as I can't make out the subject.

TO THE INFLUENZA.

THE time has come for you to leave this house. Seventeen days ago you foisted yourself upon me, and since then we have been together night and day. You were unwelcome and uninvited, and you made yourself intensely disagreeable. We wrestled, you and I, but you attacked me unawares in the back, and you threw me. Then, like the ungenerous foe that you are, you struck me while I was down. However, your designs have failed. I struggle to my feet and order you to withdraw. Nay, withdraw is too polite a word. Your cab is at the door; get out. But, stop, a word with you before you go.

Most of your hosts, I fancy, run you out of their houses without first saying what they think of you. Their one desire is to be rid of you. Perhaps they are afraid to denounce you to your face. I want, however, to tell you that I have been looking forward to this moment ever since you put me to bed. I said little while I was there, but I thought a good deal, and most of my thoughts were of you. You fancied yourself invisible, but I saw you glaring at me, and I clenched my fists beneath the blankets. I could paint your portrait. You are very tall and

stout, with a black beard, and a cruel, unsteady eye, and you have a way of crackling your fingers while you exult in your power. I used to lie watching you as you lolled in my cane-chair. At first it was empty, but I felt that you were in it, and gradually you took shape. I could hear your fingers crackling and the chair creak as you moved in it. If I sat up in fear, you disappeared, but as soon as I lay back, there you were again. I know now that in a sense you were a creature of my imagination. I have discovered something more. I know why you seemed tall and stout and bearded, and why I heard your fingers crackling.

Fever—one of your dastard weapons—was no doubt what set me drawing portraits, but why did I see you a big man with a black beard? Because long ago, when the world was young, I had a schoolmaster of that appearance. He crackled his fingers too. I had forgotten him utterly. He had gone from me with the love of climbing for crows' nests—which I once thought would never die—but during some of these seventeen days of thirty-six hours each I suppose I have been a boy again. Yet I had many schoolmasters, all sure at first that they could make something of me, all doleful when they found that I had conscientious scruples against learning. Why do I merge you into him of the crackling fingers? I know. It is because in mediæval times I hated him as I hate you. No others have I loathed with any

intensity, but he alone of my masters refused to be reconciled to my favorite method of study, which consisted, I remember (without shame) in glancing at my tasks, as I hopped and skipped to school. Sometimes I hopped and skipped, but did not arrive at school in time to take solid part in lessons, and this grieved the soul of him who wanted to be my instructor. So we differed, as Gladstonian and Conservative on the result of the Parnell Commission, and my teacher, being in office, troubled me not a little. I confess I hated him, and while I sat glumly in his room, whence the better boys had retired, much solace I found in wondering how I would slay him, supposing I had a loaded pistol, a sword, and a hatchet, and he had only one life. I schemed to be a dark, morose pirate of fourteen, so that I might capture him, even at his black-board, and make him walk the plank. I was Judge Lynch, and he was the man at the end of the rope. I charged upon him on horseback, and cut him down. I challenged him to single combat, and then I was Ivanhoe. I even found pleasure in conceiving myself shouting "Crackle-fingers" after him, and then bolting round a corner. You must see now why I pictured you heavy and dark and bearded. You are the schoolmaster of my later years. I lay in bed and gloried in the thought that presently I would be up, and fall upon you like a body of cavalry.

What did you think of my doctor? You need not

answer, for I know that you disliked him. You and I were foes, and I was getting the worst of it when he walked in and separated the combatants. His entrance was pleasant to me. He showed a contempt for you that perhaps he did not feel, and he used to take your chair. There were days when I wondered at his audacity in doing that, but I liked it, too, and by and by I may tell him why I often asked him to sit there. He was your doctor as well as mine, and every time he said that I was a little better, I knew he meant that you were a little weaker. You knew it, too, for I saw you scowling after he had gone. My doctor is also my friend, and so, when I am well, I say things against him behind his back. Then I see his weaknesses and smile comfortably at them with his other friends—whom I also discuss with him. But while you had me down he was another man. He became, as it were, a foot taller, and I felt that he alone of men had anything to say that was worth listening to. Other friends came to look curiously at me and talk of politics, or Stanley, or on other frivolous topics, but he spoke of my case, which was the great affair. I was not, in my own mind, a patient for whom he was merely doing his best; I was entirely in his hands. I was a business, and it rested with him whether I was to be wound up or carried on as usual. I daresay I tried to be pleasant with him—which is not my way—took his prescriptions as if I rather enjoyed them,

and held his thermometer in my mouth as though it were a new kind of pipe. This was diplomacy. I have no real pleasure in being fed with a spoon, nor do I intend in the future to smoke thermometers. But I knew that I must pander to my doctor's weakness if he was to take my side against you. Now that I am able to snap my fingers at you I am looking forward to sneering once more at him. Just at this moment, however, I would prefer to lay a sword flat upon his shoulders, and say, gratefully, "Arise, Sir James." He has altered the faces of the various visitors who whispered to each other in my presence, and nodded at me and said aloud that I would soon be right again, and then said something else on the other side of the door. He has opened my windows and set the sparrows a-chirping again, and he has turned on the sunshine. Lastly, he has enabled me to call your cab. I am done. Get out.

FOUR-IN-HAND NOVELISTS.

THE following is a word-puzzle. It narrates the adventures of a four-in-hand novelist while trying to lose his reputation. Competitors do not require to be told that a four-in-hand novelist is a writer of fiction who keeps four serial tales running abreast in the magazines. The names of specimen four-in-hand novelists will recur readily to every one. The puzzle is to discover who this particular novelist is; the description, as will be observed, answering to quite a number of them.

. . . . . .

A few years ago, if any one in Fleet Street had said that the day would come when I would devote my time in trying to lose my reputation, I would have smiled incredulously. That was before I had a reputation. To be as statistical as time will allow —for before I go to bed I have seven and a half yards of fiction to write—it took me fifteen years' hard work to acquire a reputation. For two years after that I worked as diligently to retain it, not being quite certain whether it was really there, and for the last five years I have done my best to get rid of it. Mr. R. L. Stevenson has a story of a dyna-

miter who tried in vain to leave an infernal machine anywhere. It was always returned to him as soon as he dropped it, or just as he was making off. My reputation is as difficult to lose. I have not given up the attempt yet, but I am already of opinion that it is even harder to lose a reputation in letters than to make one. My colleagues will bear me out in this.

If I recollect aright—for I have published so much that my works are now rather mixed up in my mind, and I have no time to verify anything—the first place I thought to leave my reputation in was a volume of pot-boilers, which I wrote many years ago for an obscure publication. At that time I was working hard for a reputation elsewhere, and these short stories were only scribbled off for a livelihood. My publisher heard of them recently, and offered me a hundred pounds for liberty to republish them in book form. I pointed out to him that they were very poor stuff, but he said that that had nothing to do with it; I had a reputation now, and they would sell. With certain misgivings—for I was not hardened yet—I accepted my publisher's terms, and the book was soon out. The first book I published, which was much the best thing I ever wrote, was only reviewed by three journals, of which two were provincial weeklies. They said it showed signs of haste, though every sentence in it was a labor. I sent copies of it to six or seven distinguished liter-

ary men—some of whom are four-in-hand now—and two of them acknowledged receipt of it, though neither said he had read it. My pot-boilers, however, had not been out many weeks before the first edition was exhausted. The book was reviewed everywhere, and, in nine cases out of ten, enthusiastically lauded. It showed a distinct advance on all my previous efforts. They were model stories of their kind. They showed a mature hand. The wit was sparkling. There were pages in the book that no one could read without emotion. In the old days I was paid for these stories at the rate of five shillings the thousand words; but they would make a reputation in themselves now. It has been thus all along. I drop my reputation into every book I write now, but there is no getting rid of it. The critics and the public return it to me, remarking that it grows bigger.

I tried to lose my reputation in several other books of the same kind, and always with the same result. Barnacles are nothing to a literary reputation. Then I tried driving four-in-hand. There are now only five or six of us who are four-in-hand novelists, but there are also four-in-hand essayists, four-in-hand critics, etc., and we all work on the same principle. Every one of us is trying to shake himself free of his reputation. We novelists have, perhaps, the best chance, for there are so few writers of fiction who have a reputation to lose that

all the magazine editors come to us for a serial tale. Next year I expect to be six-in-hand, for the provincial weeklies want me as well as the magazines. Any mere outsider would say I was safe to get rid of my reputation this year, for I am almost beating the record in the effort. A novelist of repute, who did not want to lose his reputation, would not think of writing more than one story at a time, and he would take twelve months, at least, to do it. That is not my way. Hitherto, though I have been a member of the literary four-in-hand club, I have always been some way ahead with at least two of my tales before they begin to appear in serial form. You may give up the attempt to lose your reputation, however, if you do not set about it more thoroughly than that; and the four novels which I began in January in two English magazines, one American magazine, and an illustrated paper, were all commenced in the second week of December (I had finished two novels in the last week of November). My original plan was to take them day about, doing about four chapters of each a month; but to give my reputation a still better chance of absconding, I now write them at any time. Nowadays I would never think of working out my plot beforehand. My thinking begins when I take up my pen to write, and ends when I lay it down, or even before that. In one of my stories this year I made my hero save the heroine

from a burning house. Had I done that in the old days they would have ridiculed me, but now they say I reveal fresh talent in the delightful way in which I retell a story that has no doubt been told before. The beaten tracks, it is remarked, are the best to tread when the public has such a charming guide as myself. My second novel opens with a shipwreck, and I am nearly three chapters in getting my principal characters into the boats. In my first books I used to guard carefully against the introduction of material that did not advance the story, yet at that time I was charged with "padding." In this story of the shipwreck there is so much padding that I could blush—if I had not given all that up—to think of it. Instead of confining myself to my own characters, I describe all the passengers in the vessel—telling what they were like in appearance, and what was their occupation, and what they were doing there. Then, when the shipwreck comes, I drown them one by one. By one means or another, I contrive to get six chapters out of that shipwreck, which is followed by two chapters of agony in an open boat, which I treat as if it were a novelty in fiction, and that, again, leads up to a chapter on the uncertainty of life. Most flagrant padding of all is the conversation. It always takes my characters at least two pages to say anything. They approach the point in this fashion :

Tom walked excitedly into the room, in which Peter was awaiting him. The two men looked at each other.

"You wanted to see me?" Tom said at last.

"Yes," said Peter, slowly, "I wanted to see you."

Tom looked at the other uneasily.

"Why did you want to see me?" he asked, after a pause.

"I shall tell you," replied Peter, pointing to a chair.

Tom sat down, and seemed about to speak. But he changed his mind. Peter looked at him curiously.

"Perhaps," Peter said at last, "you know my reasons for requesting an interview with you here?"

"I cannot say that I do," answered Tom.

There was another pause, during which the ticking of the clock could be distinctly heard.

"You have no idea?" inquired Peter.

"I have no idea," replied Tom.

"Do you remember," asked the older man, a little nervously, "that when old John Vansittart disappeared so suddenly from the Grange there were some persons who believed that he had been foully murdered?"

Tom passed his hand through his hair. "John Vansittart," he muttered to himself.

"The affair," continued Peter, "was never cleared up."

"It was never cleared up," said Tom. "But why," he added, "do you return to this subject?"

"You may well ask," said Peter, "why I return to it."

And so on. There is so much of this kind of thing in my recent novels that if all the lines of it were placed on end I daresay they would reach round the world. Yet I am never charged with padding now. My writing is said to be beautifully lucid. My shipwreck has made several intelligent critics ask if I have ever been a sailor, though I don't mind saying here, that, like Douglas Jerrold, I only dote upon the sea from the beach. I have been to Dover, but no further, and you will find my shipwreck told (more briefly) in Marryat. I dashed it off less than two months ago, but for the life of me I could not say whether my ship was scuttled, or went on fire, or sprang a leak. Henceforth I shall only refer to it as the shipwreck, and my memory will do all that is required of it if it prevents my mistaking the novel that contains the shipwreck. Even if I did that, however, I know from experience that my reputation would be as safe as the lives of my leading characters. I began my third novel, meaning to make my hero something of a coward, but though I worked him out after that pattern for a time, I have changed my plan. He is to be peculiarly heroic henceforth. This will not lose me my reputation. It will be said of my hero that he is drawn with no

ordinary skill, and that the author sees the two-sidedness of every man's character. As for the fourth story, it is the second one over again, with the shipwreck omitted. One night when I did not have a chapter to write—a rare thing with me—I read over the first part of this fourth tale—another rare thing—and found it so slip-shod as to be ungrammatical. The second chapter is entirely taken up with a disquisition on bald heads, but the humor of it will be said to increase my reputation. Sometimes when I become despondent of ever losing my reputation, I think of taking a whole year to write one novel in, just to see what I really could do. I wonder whether the indulgent public would notice any difference? Perhaps I could not write carefully now if I tried. The small section of the public that guesses which of the four-in-hand writers I am may think for a moment that this story of how I tried in vain to lose my reputation will help me toward the goal. They are wrong, however. The public will stand anything from us now—or they would get something better.

"Q."

A YEAR or two ago it was observed that three writers were using the curiously popular signature "Q." This was hardly less confusing than that one writer should use three signatures (Grant Allen, Arbuthnot Wilson, and Anon), but as none of the three was willing to try another letter, they had to leave it to the public (whose decision in such matters is final) to say who is Q to it. The public said, "Let him wear this proud letter who can win it," and for the present at least it is in the possession of the author of "The Splendid Spur" and "The Blue Pavilions." It would seem, too, as if it were his "to keep," for "Q" is like the competition cups that are only yours for a season, unless you manage to carry them three times in succession. Mr. Quiller-Couch has been champion Q since 1890.

The interesting question is not so much, What has he done to be the only prominent Q of these years? as Is he to be the Q of all time? If so, he will do better work than he has yet done, though several of his latest sketches—and one in particu-

lar — are of very uncommon merit. Mr. Quiller-Couch is so unlike Mr. Kipling that one immediately wants to compare them. They are both young, and they have both shown such promise that it will be almost sad if neither can write a book to live—as, of course, neither has done as yet. Mr. Kipling is the more audacious, which is probably a matter of training. He was brought up in India, where one's beard grows much quicker than at Oxford, and where you not only become a man (and a cynic) in a hurry, but see and hear strange things (and print them) such as the youth of Oxford miss, or, becoming acquainted with, would not dare insert in the local magazine of the moment. So Mr. Kipling's first work betokened a knowledge of the world that is by no means to be found in "Dead Man's Rock," the first book published by Mr. Quiller-Couch. On the other hand, it cannot truly be said that Mr. Kipling's latest work is stronger than his first, while the other writer's growth is the most remarkable thing about him. It is precisely the same Mr. Kipling who is now in the magazines that was writing some years ago in India (and a rare good Mr. Kipling, too), but the Mr. Quiller-Couch of to-day is the Quiller-Couch of "Dead Man's Rock" grown out of recognition. To compare their styles is really to compare the men. Mr. Kipling's is the more startling, the stronger (as yet), and the more mannered. Mark Twain, it appears, said he reads Mr. Kipling

for his style, which is really the same thing as saying you read him for his books, though the American seems only to have meant that he eats the beef because he likes the salt. It is a journalistic style, aiming too constantly at sharp effects, always succeeding in getting them. Sometimes this is contrived at the expense of grammar, as when (a common trick with the author) he ends a story with such a paragraph as "Which is manifestly unfair." Mr. Quiller-Couch has never sinned in this way, but his first style was somewhat turgid, even melodramatic, and compared with Mr. Kipling's, lacked distinction. From the beginning Mr. Kipling had the genius for using the right word twice in three times (Mr. Stevenson only misses it about once in twelve), while Mr. Quiller-Couch not only used the wrong word, but weighted it with adjectives. The charge, however, cannot be brought against him to-day, for having begun by writing like a Mr. Haggard not quite sure of himself (if one can imagine such a Mr. Haggard), and changing to an obvious imitation of Mr. Stevenson, he seems now to have made a style for himself. It is clear and careful, but not as yet strong-winged. Its distinctive feature is that it is curiously musical.

"Dead Man's Rock" is a capital sensational story to be read and at once forgotten. It was followed by "The Astonishing History of Troy Town," which was humorous, and proved that the author owed a

debt to Dickens. But it was not sufficiently humorous to be remarkable for its humor, and it will go hand in hand with "Dead Man's Rock" to oblivion. Until "The Splendid Spur" appeared Mr. Quiller-Couch had done little to suggest that an artist had joined the ranks of the story-tellers. It is not in any way a great work, but it was among the best dozen novels of its year, and as the production of a new writer it was one of the most notable. About the same time was published another historical romance of the second class (for to nothing short of Sir Walter shall we give a first-class in this department), "Micah Clarke," by Mr. Conan Doyle. It was as inevitable that the two books should be compared as that he who enjoyed the one should enjoy the other. In one respect "Micah Clarke" is the better story. It contains one character, a soldier of fortune, who is more memorable than any single figure in "The Splendid Spur." This, however, is effected at a cost, for this man is the book. It contains, indeed, two young fellows, one of them a John Ridd, but no Diana Vernon would blow a kiss to either. Both stories are weak in pathos, despite Joan, but there are a score of humorous situations in "The Splendid Spur" that one could not forget if he would—which he would not—as, for instance, where hero and heroine are hidden in barrels in a ship, and hero cries through his bunghole, "Wilt marry me, sweetheart?" to which heroine replies,

"Must get out of this cask first." Better still is the scene in which Captain Billy expatiates, with a mop and a bucket, on the merits of his crew. But the passages are for reading, not for hearing about. Of the characters, this same Captain Billy is not the worst, but perhaps the best is Joan, Mr. Quiller-Couch's first successful picture of a girl. A capital eccentric figure is killed (some good things are squandered in this book) just when we are beginning to find him a genuine novelty. Anything that is ready to leap into danger seems to be thought good enough for the hero of a fighting romance, so that Jack Marvel will pass (though Delia, as is right and proper, is worth two of him, despite her coming-on disposition). The villain is a failure, and the plot poor. Nevertheless there are some ingenious complications in it. Jack's escape by means of the hangman's rope, which was to send him out of the world in a few hours, is a fine rollicking bit of sensation. Where Mr. Quiller-Couch and Mr. Conan Doyle both fail as compared with the great master of romance is in the introduction of historical figures and episodes. Scott would have been a great man if he had written no novel but "The Abbot" (one of his second best), and no part of "The Abbot" but the scene in which Mary signs away her crown. Mr. Quiller-Couch almost entirely avoids such attempts, and even Mr. Conan Doyle only dips into them timidly. There is, one has been told, a theory

that the romancist has no right to picture history in this way. But he makes his rights when he does it as Scott did it.

Since "The Splendid Spur," Mr. Quiller-Couch has published nothing in book form which can be considered an advance on his best novel, but there have appeared by him a number of short Cornish sketches, which are perhaps best considered as experiments. They are perilously slight, and where they are successful one remembers them as sweet dreams or like a bar of music. All aim at this effect, so that many should not be taken at a time, and some (as was to be expected with such delicate work) miss their mark. It might be said that in several of these melodies Mr. Quiller-Couch has been writing the same thing again and again, determined to succeed absolutely, if not this time then the next, and if not the next then the time after. In one case he has succeeded absolutely. "The Small People" is a prose "Song of the Shirt." To my mind this is a rare piece of work, and the biggest thing for its size that has been done in English fiction for some years.

These sketches have been called experiments. They show (as his books scarcely show) that Mr. Quiller-Couch can feel. They suggest that he may be able to do for Cornwall what Mr. Hardy has done for Dorset—though the methods of the two writers are as unlike as their counties. But that can only

be if in filling his note-book with these little comedies and tragedies Mr. Quiller-Couch is preparing for more sustained efforts.

"Our hope and heart is with thee
We will stand and mark."

RULES FOR CARVING.

Rule I.—It is not good form to climb onto the table. There is no doubt a great temptation to this. When you are struggling with a duck, and he wobbles over just as you think you have him, you forget yourself. The common plan is not to leap upon the table all at once. This is the more usual process: The carver begins to carve sitting. By and by he is on his feet, and his brow is contracted. His face approaches the fowl, as if he wanted to inquire within about everything except that the duck is reluctant to yield any of its portions. One of his feet climbs into his chair, then the other. His knees are now resting against the table, and, in his excitement, he, so to speak, flings himself upon the fowl. This brings us to

Rule II.—Carving should not be made a matter of brute force. It ought from the outset to be kept in mind that you and the duck are not pitted against each other in mortal combat. Never wrestle with any dish whatever; in other words, keep your head, and if you find yourself becoming excited, stop and count a hundred. This will calm you, when you can begin again.

Rule III.—It will not assist you to call the fowl names. This rule is most frequently broken by a gentleman carving for his own family circle. If there are other persons present, he generally manages to preserve a comparatively calm exterior, just as the felon on the scaffold does ; but in privacy he breaks out in a storm of invective. If of a sarcastic turn of mind, he says that he has seen many a duck in his day, but never a duck like this. It is double-jointed. It is so tough that it might have come over to England with the Conqueror.

Rule IV.—Don't boast when it is all over. You must not call the attention of the company to the fact that you have succeeded. Don't exclaim exultingly, "I knew I would manage it," or "I never yet knew a duck that I couldn't conquer somehow." Don't exclaim in a loud gratified voice how you did it, nor demonstrate your way of doing it by pointing to the *débris* with the carving knife. Don't even be mock-modest, and tell everybody that carving is the simplest thing in the world. Don't wipe your face repeatedly with your napkin, as if you were in a state of perspiration, nor talk excitedly, as if your success had gone to your head. Don't ask your neighbors what they think of your carving. Your great object is to convince them that you look upon carving as the merest bagatelle, as something that you do every day and rather enjoy.

WHAT IS SCOTT'S BEST NOVEL?

Mr. Gladstone, I think, pronounces in favor of "Kenilworth." It is a splendid pageant, and perhaps, of all the Waverleys, tells the most touching story, yet none of the characters is of the first order, and Varney makes it a melodrama. We are only told of Leicester's accomplishments. Alasco is not great until he reappears in "Quentin Durward" as Galeotti. Mike Lambourne is good if we can forget other soldiers of fortune who are better (Dalgetty, of course, heads the list). Wayland is not one man, but several. Raleigh is merely a smart courtier. In this novel, indeed, Scott only rises to his highest for five minutes. Elizabeth all but accepting Leicester's hand, and next moment all but sending him to the Tower, is as immortal as the defeat of the Armada. Compare with it the chapter in "The Abbot" in which Mary is forced to resign her crown. These are two of the sublime scenes in fiction, but we cannot estimate Scott without considering them together. That the man who can give us such a Queen Mary should also have sufficient sympathy with her rival to give us such a Queen Elizabeth, is astonishing. This is what it is to have a

well-balanced mind as well as to be a genius. Perhaps Mary is the finest of all Scott's historical characters, though few will call "The Abbot" his best novel. The first third of it is dull and about nothing in particular. Until he gets away from the atmosphere of "The Monastery" the author seems to have lost the knack. To me "The Abbot" opens with Roland's arrival in Edinburgh, or, if a little before that, with the damsel he met on the way. "Woodstock" is by no means in the first class, yet it, like "Kenilworth," has its great moment: where Charles consents to fight the duel. An author's great moments are great moments to his readers also. Suddenly we know what is coming, and our blood runs quicker, and we are as delighted as if it was we who had done it. No other British novelist produces these effects more than once or twice. Thackeray does it, as has been pointed out often, in the scene where Becky admires Rawdon for knocking Lord Steyne down. He does it again in the last chapter of "Esmond."

Many will say that the greatest of the Waverleys is Scotch. Yet though five out of every six of Scott's best characters are Scotchmen, it does not follow that any one of the Scotch novels is greater than any one of the other novels. "Waverley" itself only becomes a novel by losing its way, so to speak. It starts off with the intention of being little more than a record of travel. The hero, too, is even more

of a prig than usual. "Guy Mannering" and "The Antiquary" are probably the two Scotch novels that would receive the largest number of votes from the public. Of these I think the second much the better, though it has less of the glamour of romance. Dominie Sampson is a caricature with a catchword, as they say on the stage. He has wandered into Scott out of Dickens. Meg Merrilies was a favorite type of character with the author, but she is, to be blunt, something of a bore. She belongs to the footlights. But think of the Edinburgh scenes! It was impossible for Scott to write about Edinburgh without at once becoming inspired. The name was enough. It was charged with romance. It wrought on his spirit like wine. Down he sat, and turned off reams of delight. Nevertheless, though the Edinburgh of "Waverley," "The Abbot," and "The Heart of Midlothian" is for reading about at least once a year, it is ill-treating one's self not to turn to the Edinburgh of "Guy Mannering" every six months. But I am not giving up "The Antiquary." It is the best of the Scotch Waverleys. Monkbarns and Edie, and the sister of Monkbarns, and a certain fish-wife, and the post-office of Fairport—where shall we find the like in one book? Lovel's history and Dousterswivel's schemes are of no account, but no effort is required to forget them. Think of Steenie's death, and it is done.

Nearly every year Scottish theatre-managers "put on" a semi-operatic adaptation of "Rob Roy," and

the piece never fails to attract. This is so much the most popular of Scott's novels when deformed into acts, that there may be a public which considers "Rob Roy" his masterpiece. Certainly others of his stories would adapt as well, or as ill. But probably it is Rob's personality that takes the hearts of theatre-goers. The book is hardly among the author's six best, though it is better than "The Bride of Lammermoor," which is second favorite with the playwrights. There are two figures in "Old Mortality" quite good enough to be in "The Antiquary," Mause Headrigg and Cuddie. I would not complain if told that Mause was one mark better than even Edie Ochiltree. But, like "The Heart of Midlothian," the story suffers by its long-drawn-out ending. "The Heart of Midlothian" has one claim for first place. It contains Scott's only heroine—if by heroine we mean the young woman who is loved by the nominal hero. "The Fair Maid of Perth," again, contains Scott's only interesting hero. Jeanie Deans and Hal o' the Wynd are of lower social rank than any others of Scott's heroines and heroes. They are almost the only ones who do not speak of their ancestors. As a recompense, they are human. To Scott it is usually enough if his hero is a pretty fighter, of a daring temper, or a melancholy cast of countenance. He seems to fear getting upon intimate terms with these heroes. Or perhaps he had a notion that high-spirited young

gentlemen are much alike. His heroines are beautiful, and what more can a hero want? But Jeanie and Hal are treated with humor, and we know them as a consequence as well as if they were only people whom the hero and heroine had met on the road. Obviously, then, not even Scott's greatest novel is perfect. Each of the dozen chief ones has its outstanding merits, and fails where some other is strongest. If there is an exception it is "The Legend of Montrose." It is only a sketch, perhaps, but what would one like to see out of it?

"Ivanhoe" is best. It contains characters nearly as good as Monkbarns and the rest, the story is nearly as interesting as "Kenilworth." Together these are the most brilliant historical novels ever written. Richard is nearly as good as Queen Mary. But Ivanhoe stands apart. On the whole it is the most delightful thing in English fiction. Who would dare to draw a tournament after that one of Scott's? He has stopped the attempt as thoroughly as by act of Parliament. And even as tournaments are his, so are Robin Hood and his merry men. As if the Saxons and Isaac of York and Richard and the siege of Torquilstone were not enough, he has flung in Rebecca and the Templar, to show that he is not "subjective" merely because to be "objective" is better. Scott's greatest day was when he decided to finish "Waverley." Next comes the day when he sat down to write "Ivanhoe."

MY FAVORITE AUTHORESS.

JUST out of the four-mile radius—to give the cabby his chance—is a sleepy lane, lent by the country to the town, and we have only to open a little gate off it to find ourselves in an old-fashioned garden. The house, with its many quaint windows, across which evergreens spread their open fingers as a child makes believe to shroud his eyes, has a literary look—at least, so it seems to me, but perhaps this is because I know the authoress who is at this moment advancing down the walk to meet me.

She has hastily laid aside her hoop, and crosses the grass with the dignity that becomes a woman of letters. Her hair falls over her forehead in an attractive way, and she is just the proper height for an authoress. The face, so open that one can watch the process of thinking out a new novel in it, from start to finish, is at times a little careworn, as if it found the world weighty, but at present there is a gracious smile on it, and she greets me heartily with one hand, while the other strays to her neck, to make sure that her lace collar is lying nicely. It would be idle to pretend that she is much more than eight years old, "but then Maurice is only six."

Like most literary people who put their friends into books, she is very modest, and it never seems to strike her that I would come all this way to see her.

"Mamma is out," she says simply, "but she will be back soon; and papa is at a meeting, but he will be back soon, too."

I know what meeting her papa is at. He is crazed with admiration for Stanley, and can speak of nothing but the Emin Relief Expedition. While he is away proposing that Stanley should get the freedom of Hampstead, now is my opportunity to interview the authoress.

"Won't you come into the house?"

I accompany the authoress to the house, while we chat pleasantly on literary topics.

"Oh, there is Maurice, silly boy!"

Maurice is too busy shooting arrows into the next garden to pay much attention to me; and the authoress smiles at him good-naturedly.

"I hope you'll stay to dinner," he says to me, "because then we'll have two kinds of pudding."

The authoress and I give each other a look which means that children will be children, and then we go indoors.

"Are you not going to play any more?" cries Maurice to the authoress.

She blushes a little.

"I was playing with him," she explains, "to keep him out of mischief till mamma comes back."

In the drawing-room we talk for a time of ordinary matters—of the allowances one must make for a child like Maurice, for instance—and gradually we drift to the subject of literature. I know literary people sufficiently well to be aware that they will talk freely—almost too freely—of their work if approached in the proper spirit.

"Are you busy just now?" I ask, with assumed carelessness, and as if I had not been preparing the question since I heard papa was out.

She looks at me, suspiciously, as authors usually do when asked such a question. They are not certain whether you are really sympathetic. However, she reads honesty in my eyes.

"Oh, well, I am doing a little thing." (They always say this.)

"A story or an article?"

"A story."

"I hope it will be good."

"I don't know. I don't like it much." (This is another thing they say, and then they wait for you to express incredulity.)

"I have no doubt it will be a fine thing. Have you given it a name?"

"Oh, yes; I always write the name. Sometimes I don't write any more."

As she was in a confidential mood this seemed an excellent chance for getting her views on some of the vexed literary questions of the day. For in-

stance, everybody seems to be more interested in hearing during what hours of the day an author writes than in reading his book.

"Do you work best in the early part of the day or at night?"

"I write my stories just before tea."

"That surprises me. Most writers, I have been told, get through a good deal of work in the morning."

"Oh, but I go to school as soon as breakfast is over."

"And you don't write at night?"

"No; nurse always turns the gas down."

I had read somewhere that among the novelist's greatest difficulties is that of sustaining his own interest in a novel day by day until it is finished.

"Until your new work is completed do you fling your whole heart and soul into it? I mean, do you work straight on at it, so to speak, until you have finished the last chapter?"

"Oh, yes."

The novelists were lately reproved in a review for working too quickly, and it was said that one wrote a whole novel in two months.

"How long does it take you to write a novel?"

"Do you mean a long novel?"

"Yes."

"It takes me nearly an hour."

"For a really long novel?"

"Yes, in three volumes. I write in three exercise-books—a volume in each."

"You write very quickly."

"Of course, a volume doesn't fill a whole exercise-book. They are penny exercise-books. I have a great many three-volume stories in the three exercise-books."

"But are they really three-volume novels?"

"Yes, for they are in chapters, and one of them has twenty chapters."

"And how many chapters are there in a page?"

"Not very many."

Some authors admit that they take their characters from real life, while others declare that they draw entirely upon their imagination.

"Do you put real people into your novels?"

"Yes, Maurice and other people, but generally Maurice."

"I have heard that some people are angry with authors for putting them into books."

"Sometimes Maurice is angry, but I can't always make him an engine-driver, can I?"

"No. I think it is quite unreasonable on his part to expect it. I suppose he likes to be made an engine-driver?"

"He is to be an engine-driver when he grows up, he says. He is a silly boy, but I love him."

"What else do you make him in your books?"

"To-day I made him like Stanley, because I think

that is what papa would like him to be; and yesterday he was papa, and I was his coachman."

"He would like that?"

"No, he wanted me to be papa and him the coachman. Sometimes I make him a pirate, and he likes that, and once I made him a girl."

"He would be proud?"

"That was the day he hit me. He is awfully angry if I make him a girl, silly boy. Of course he doesn't understand."

"Obviously not. But did you not punish him for being so cruel as to hit you?"

"Yes, I turned him into a cat, but he said he would rather be a cat than a girl. You see he's not much more than a baby—though I was writing books at his age."

"Were you ever charged with plagiarism? I mean with copying your books out of other people's books."

"Yes, often."

"I suppose that is the fate of all authors. I am told that literary people write best in an old coat———"

"Oh, I like to be nicely dressed when I am writing. Here is papa, and I do believe he has another portrait of Stanley in his hand. Mamma will be so annoyed."

MARIE CORELLI'S WORKS.

"An author exhibiting rare skill as a fascinating and highly instructive writer on the profoundest themes which can engage human attention."

A POWERFUL PSYCHOLOGICAL ROMANCE.

THE SOUL OF LILITH.

By MARIE CORELLI, author of "Ardath," "Wormwood," etc. 12mo, cloth, gilt, $1.25.

"A novel of high purpose and artistic execution, chaste and elevating in tone."
—*New York World.*

"The best mystical story that has appeared since the days of Bulwer's 'Zanoni.'"—*Philadelphia Public Ledger.*

"Original in essence, radical in suggestion, startling in development. 'The Soul of Lilith' is not a book to hurry through and dismiss. It deserves and demands thought and repays it. There must be many who are waiting for such a vindication of the ways of God to men, and to those the book will bring a strength and comfort that no words can express."—*Boston Times.*

WORMWOOD.

By MARIE CORELLI, author of "A Romance of Two Worlds," "Ardath," etc. 12mo, cloth, gilt, $1.00.

"A strange and fascinating book."—*New York World.*

"The work thrills with the intellectual energy of a brilliant woman."
—*Detroit Tribune.*

"This strong romance is an extremely realistic study of the horrible demoralization caused by the absinthe habit. Miss Corelli has handled her terrible theme with true vigor and efficiency, together with artistic reserve and moderation. In 'Wormwood' Miss Corelli has scored a real success, employing to a worthy end an art in the line of the most popular French writers."—*Boston Literary World.*

THELMA.

A Norwegian Princess. By MARIE CORELLI, author of "A Romance of Two Worlds," "Wormwood," etc. 12mo, cloth, gilt, $1.00; paper, 50 cents.

"'Thelma' is a beautiful creation, and the portion of the romance which deals with Norwegian life is full of charm and interest."—*Charleston News and Courier.*

"One of the strongest stories that has appeared this season. It is laid in Norway and the field in itself adds interest to the story, but outside from this, it is delightfully written and is altogether a charming tale."
—*Minneapolis Commercial Bulletin.*

"A novel that should be read when appreciation needs no spur, for it is one that will engage the reader's best attention. The characters have been carefully studied and are pictured with equal care and an effect of reality."—*Boston Times.*

Lovell, Coryell & Company, Publishers, New York.

MARIE CORELLI'S WORKS.

VENDETTA, AND MY WONDERFUL WIFE.

By MARIE CORELLI, author of "The Soul of Lilith," "Wormwood," etc. 12mo, cloth, gilt, $1.00; paper, 50 cents.

In all of Marie Corelli's writings there is a vein of weird mysticism which suggests the fascination which the snake is said to exercise over a bird. This is particularly true of "Vendetta." The reader is unconsciously drawn on from page to page by an absorbing interest which is so intense that an interruption is almost like an awakening from the dreams of sleep.

A ROMANCE OF TWO WORLDS.

By MARIE CORELLI, author of "Wormwood," "The Soul of Lilith," etc. 12mo, cloth, gilt, $1.00; paper, 50 cents.

"A Romance of Two Worlds" by Marie Corelli has been one of the most successful novels published in America during the last five years The field of occultism is invaded by this most delightful author and it is with difficulty that one prevents the belief that actual experiences are being related. It would seem from the text that there are those who have received the gift of peering into the mysteries of the future and depicting its events as graphically as does the historian the events of the past.

ARDATH.

By MARIE CORELLI, author of "The Soul of Lilith," "Wormwood," etc. 12mo, cloth, gilt, $1.00; paper, 50 cents.

One of the most popular of the works of Marie Corelli is "Ardath," a new and pleasing edition of which is now ready. It seems almost incredible that an author of such comparative youth should have written so many works of such universally high order.

COMPLETE WORKS OF MARIE CORELLI.

In sets, 12mo, cloth, 6 vols., $6.00.

Same, half calf, $12.00.

***For sale by all booksellers, or sent, post-paid, on receipt of price, by the publishers.*

***Send for complete catalogue of new and standard publications.*

LOVELL, CORYELL & COMPANY,

PUBLISHERS,

43, 45 and 47 East Tenth Street, NEW YORK.

THE WORKS OF J. M. BARRIE,

"The Dickens of Scotland."

WHEN A MAN'S SINGLE.

By J. M. BARRIE. 12mo, cloth, gilt top, $1.00; paper, 50 cents.

"A remarkably interesting novel because of its vivid character-drawing and the skill with which a scene is brought before the eye by a few sharp touches."
—*Boston Saturday Evening Gazette.*

"A budget of quaint conceits, witty epigrams, and Barrie's own peculiar humor."
—*New York World.*

"The language in 'When a Man's Single' is undefiled by one extravagance or indifference, and his delicious sketches of English newspaper routine are brimful of life-like color and rich humor."—*Chicago News.*

AN EDINBURGH ELEVEN.

Pencil Portraits from College Life. By J. M. BARRIE. 12mo, cloth, gilt top, $1.00.

A series of delightful character sketches, in the reminiscent vein, of university professors identified with Barrie's college life. All the charming characteristics of the author are present in this volume without the stumbling block of the Scottish dialect.

BETTER DEAD, AND MY LADY NICOTINE.

By J. M. BARRIE. 12mo, cloth, gilt top, $1.00.

The same delicacy of touch, the same multiplicity of ideas, presented in short, pregnant sentences, clear cut and telling to a marked degree, is conspicuous in Barrie's first work as well as in his last. "Better Dead," a strong character sketch, gives evidence of this, and from those who read the story, it will call forth another vote of praise for the author of "The Little Minister."

"My Lady Nicotine" is a veritable "study in smoke," and will therefore appeal the more strongly to those who are lovers of the weed. Yet in no sense are these delightful essays for one class only, for no one can fail to appreciate their delicate humor and fine character sketching, as well as their unmistakable literary value.

BARRIE'S COMPLETE WORKS.

In a neat box, 6 vols., beveled cloth, gilt top, $6.25; half calf, $12.00.

For sale by all booksellers, or sent, upon receipt of price, by the publishers.
Send for complete catalogue of standard works and recent issues.

Lovell, Coryell & Company, Publishers, New York.

THE WORKS OF J. M. BARRIE,

"The Dickens of Scotland."

"Mr. Barrie is dowered with a photographic power of reproducing what he sees, a humor which plays gently around whatever topic it touches, and a style distinctive in the possession of certain qualities as irresistible as they are delightful."
—*Philadelphia Press.*

"His humor is as fresh as his pathos, and his knowledge of the subtle complexities of Scotch character go far beyond that of his predecessors."
—*Boston Literary World.*

THE LITTLE MINISTER.

By J. M. BARRIE. New edition, with full-page illustrations. 12mo, cloth, gilt, $1.25; paper, 50 cents.

A LITERARY MARVEL.

"'The Little Minister' is a great novel."—*New York Press.*

"The story is sweet and human from the first word to the last."
—*St. Paul Globe.*

"A work of front-rank importance."—*Philadelphia Press.*

"'The Little Minister' is a masterpiece. There is not a mistake in it. Every character is perfectly natural, not a word nor an action is artificial."—*Kansas City Star.*

"An uncommonly strong novel, full of the most effective contrasts and the most piquant scenes of Scotch life."
—*New York Tribune.*

A WINDOW IN THRUMS.

By J. M. BARRIE. 12mo, cloth, gilt top, $1.00; paper, 50 cents.

"A work which will long retain many admirers, for its cleverness, delightful character-drawing, and freshness are more than fleeting."—*Boston Times.*

"The simplicity which marks 'A Window in Thrums' is delightful. The quaint Scotch dialect adds to its pathos and dignity, and it is full of homely wit and sympathy in its simple annals."—*Boston Globe.*

AULD LICHT IDYLLS.

By J. M. BARRIE. 12mo, cloth, gilt top, $1.00; paper, 50 cents.

"A charming collection of studies of Scotch peasant character written in a delightful manner. There is uncommon power in the delineation of character, and the pathos and humor of the book are in Barrie's best vein. In brief, these studies are of exceptional merit; remarkable for their vivid word picturing and fidelity to nature."—*Providence Journal.*

Lovell, Coryell & Company, Publishers, New York.

RK401
T96
1893